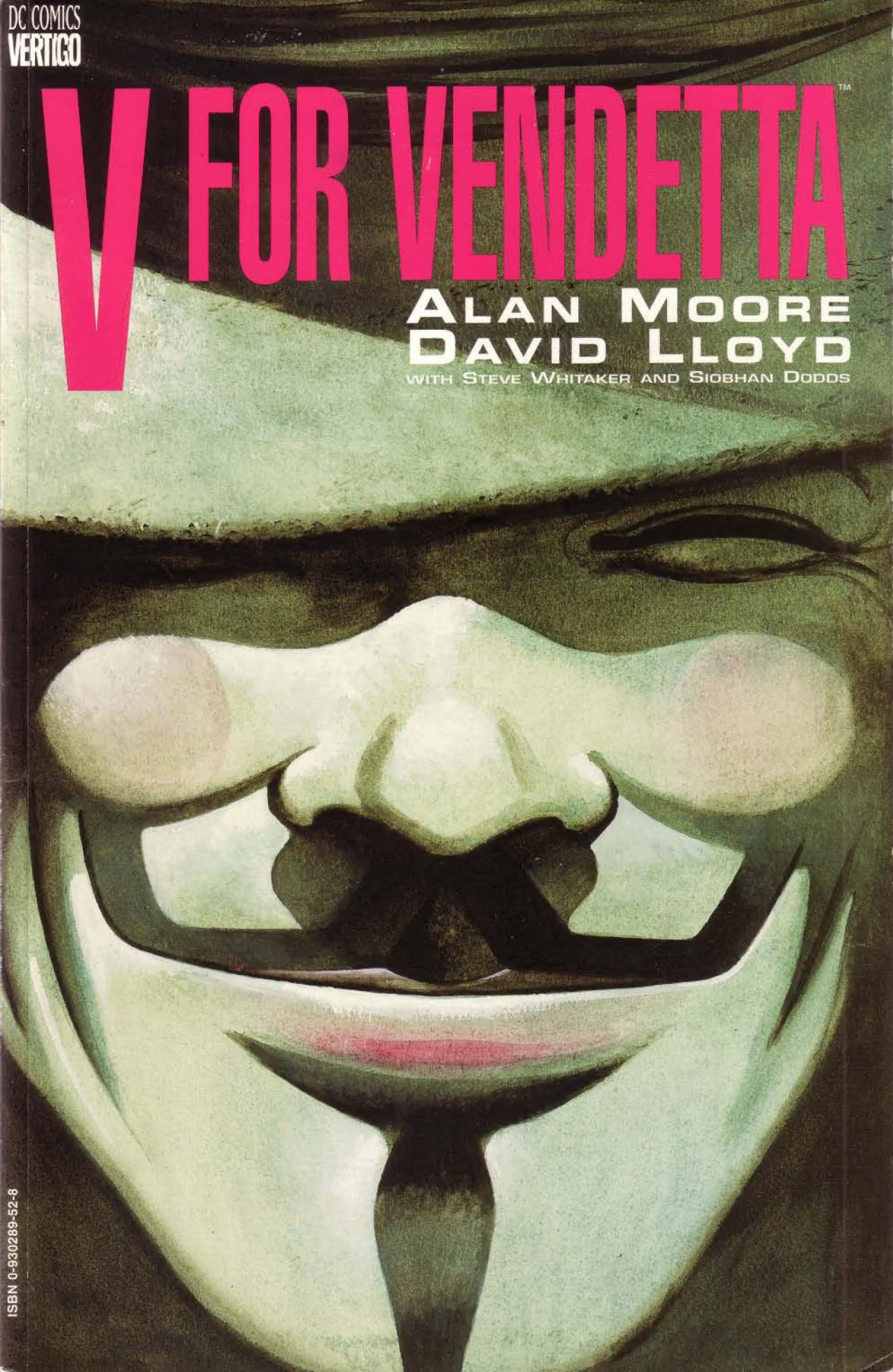


DC COMICS  
VERTIGO

# V FOR VENDETTA™

ALAN MOORE  
DAVID LLOYD

WITH STEVE WHITAKER AND SIOBHAN DODDS



ISBN 0-930289-52-8



# V FOR VENDETTA



ALAN MOORE

DAVID LLOYD

# V FOR





# VENDETTA





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few nights ago, I walked into a pub on my way home and ordered a Guinness.

I didn't look at my watch, but I knew it was before 8 o'clock. It was Tuesday and I could hear the television in the background still running the latest episode of "EastEnders"—a soap about the day-to-day life of cheeky, cheery working-class people in a decaying, mythical part of London.

I sat in a booth and picked up a copy of a free newspaper someone had left on the seat beside me. I'd read it before. There wasn't much news in it. I put down the paper and decided to sit at the bar.

It wasn't a busy night. I could hear the murmuring of the distant TV above the chatter of the people at the bar and the clack-clack of colliding snooker balls.

After "EastEnders" came "Porridge"—a re-run of a situation comedy series about a cheeky, cheery prisoner in a comfortably unoppressive, decaying, Victorian prison.

Almost imperceptibly, spirits leaked from the optics of upturned bottles behind the bar. Droplets of whisky and vodka formed and fell soundlessly as I watched.

I finished my drink. I looked up and the barman caught my eye. "Guinness?" he asked, already reaching for a fresh glass. I nodded.

The barman's wife arrived and began to help with the trickle of customers' orders.

At 8:30, following "Porridge," came "A Question Of Sport"—a simple panel quiz game featuring cheeky, cheery sports celebrities answering questions about other sports celebrities, many of whom were as cheeky and cheery as themselves.

Jocularly reigned.

"I'll tell the barman about the leaking optics," I thought.

"The Nine o'Clock News" followed "A Question Of Sport." Or, at least for 30 seconds it did, before the television was switched off and cheeky, cheery pop music took its place.

I looked over at the barman. "Just half this time," I said.

As he filled the glass, I solemnly asked him why he'd switched off the News. "Don't ask me—that was the wife," he replied, in a cheeky, cheery manner, as the subject of his playful targeting bustled in a corner of the bar.

The leaking optics had ceased to have any importance for me.

I finished my drink and left, almost certain the TV would be silent for the rest of the evening. For after "The Nine o'Clock News" would have come "The Boys From Brazil," a film with few cheeky, cheery characters in it, which is all about a bunch of Nazis creating 94 clones of Adolf Hitler.

There aren't many cheeky, cheery characters in V FOR VENDETTA either; and it's for people who don't switch off the News.

David Lloyd

14 January 90



**I** began V FOR VENDETTA in the summer of 1981, during a working holiday upon the Isle of Wight. My youngest daughter, Amber, was a few months old. I finished it in the late winter of 1988, after a gap in publishing of nearly five years from the discontinuation of England's *Warrior* magazine, its initial home. Amber is now seven. I don't know why I mentioned that. It's just one of those unremarkable facts that strike you suddenly, with unexpected force, so that you have to go and sit down.

Along with Marvelman (now Miracleman), V FOR VENDETTA represents my first attempt at a continuing series, begun at the outset of my career. For this reason, amongst others, there are things that ring oddly in earlier episodes when judged in the light of the strip's later development. I trust you'll bear with us during any initial clumsiness, and share our opinion that it was for the best to show the early episodes unrevised, warts and all, rather than go back and eradicate all trace of youthful creative inexperience.

There is also a certain amount of political inexperience upon my part evident in these early episodes. Back in 1981 the term "nuclear winter" had not passed into common currency, and although my guess about climatic upheaval came pretty close to the eventual truth of the situation, the fact remains that the story to hand suggests that a nuclear war, even a limited one, might be survivable. To the best of my current knowledge, this is not the case.

Naiveté can also be detected in my supposition that it would take something as melodramatic as a near-miss nuclear conflict to nudge England towards fascism. Although in fairness to myself and David, there were no better or more accurate predictions of our country's future available in comic form at that time. The simple fact that much of the historical background of the story proceeds from a predicted Conservative defeat in the 1982 General Election should tell you how reliable we were in our role as Cassandras.

It's 1988 now. Margaret Thatcher is entering her third term of office and talking confidently of an unbroken Conservative leadership well into the next century. My youngest daughter is seven and the tabloid press are circulating the idea of concentration camps for persons with AIDS. The new riot police wear black visors, as do their horses, and their vans have rotating video cameras mounted on top. The government has expressed a desire to eradicate homosexuality, even as an abstract concept, and one can only speculate as to which minority will be the next legislated against. I'm thinking of taking my family and getting out of this country soon, sometime over the next couple of years. It's cold and it's mean spirited and I don't like it here anymore.

Goodnight England. Goodnight Home Service and V for Victory.

Hello the Voice of Fate and V FOR VENDETTA.

Alan Moore

Northampton, March 1988





EUROPE AFTER THE REIGN



# V FOR VENDETTA



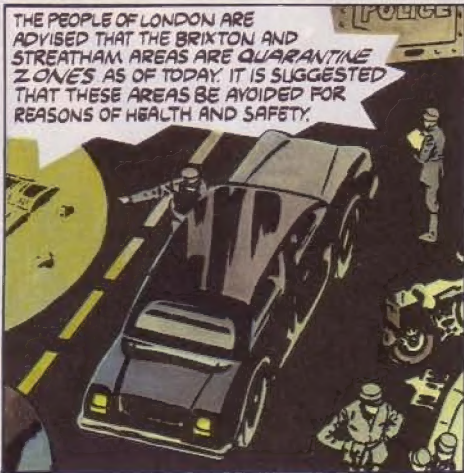
GOOD EVENING, LONDON.  
IT'S NINE O'CLOCK AND THIS  
IS THE VOICE OF FATE  
BROADCASTING ON 275 AND 285  
IN THE MEDIUM WAVE... IT IS  
THE FIFTH OF THE ELEVENTH,  
NINETEEN-NINETY-SEVEN...



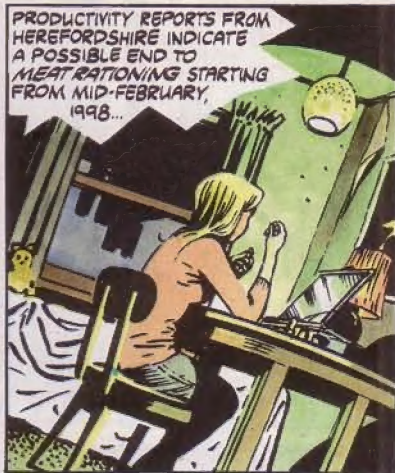
THE WEATHER WILL BE FINE  
UNTIL 12:07 A.M. WHEN A  
SHOWER WILL COMMENCE,  
LASTING UNTIL 1:30 A.M...



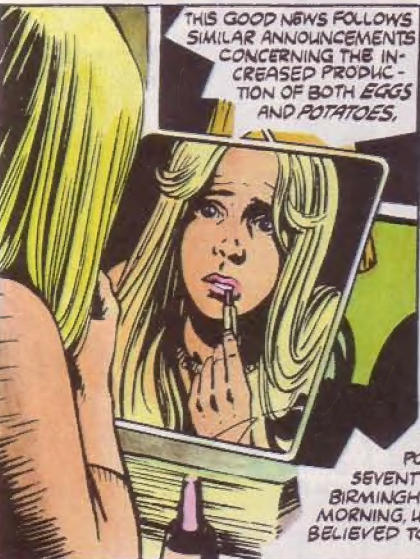
THE TEMPERATURE WILL  
VARY BETWEEN 13 AND 14  
DEGREES CENTIGRADE  
THROUGHOUT  
THE NIGHT.



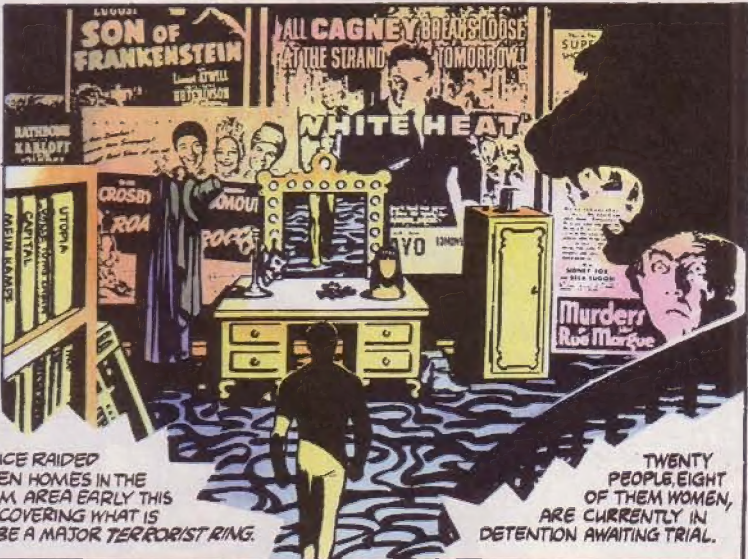
THE PEOPLE OF LONDON ARE  
ADVISED THAT THE BRIXTON AND  
STREATHAM AREAS ARE QUARANTINE  
ZONES AS OF TODAY. IT IS SUGGESTED  
THAT THESE AREAS BE AVOIDED FOR  
REASONS OF HEALTH AND SAFETY.



PRODUCTIVITY REPORTS FROM  
HEREFORDSHIRE INDICATE  
A POSSIBLE END TO  
MEAT RATIONING STARTING  
FROM MID-FEBRUARY,  
1998...



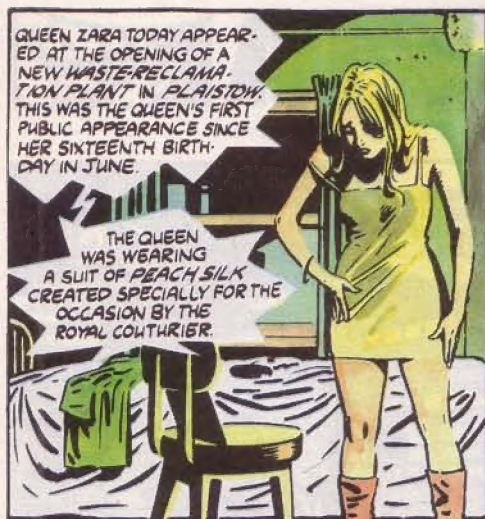
THIS GOOD NEWS FOLLOWS  
SIMILAR ANNOUNCEMENTS  
CONCERNING THE IN-  
CREASED PRODUC-  
TION OF BOTH EGGS  
AND POTATOES.



POLICE RAIDED  
SEVENTEEN HOMES IN THE  
BIRMINGHAM AREA EARLY THIS  
MORNING, UNCOVERING WHAT IS  
BELIEVED TO BE A MAJOR TERRORIST RING.

TWENTY  
PEOPLE, EIGHT  
OF THEM WOMEN,  
ARE CURRENTLY IN  
DETENTION AWAITING TRIAL.

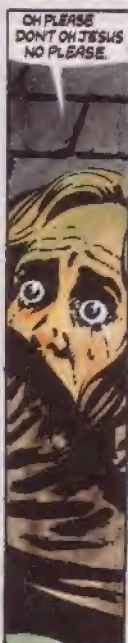
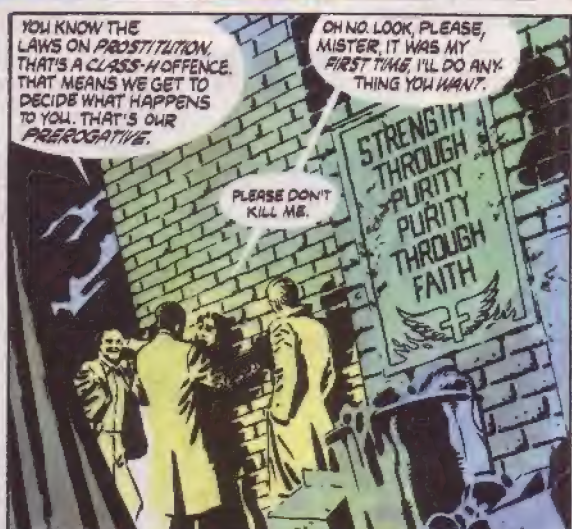
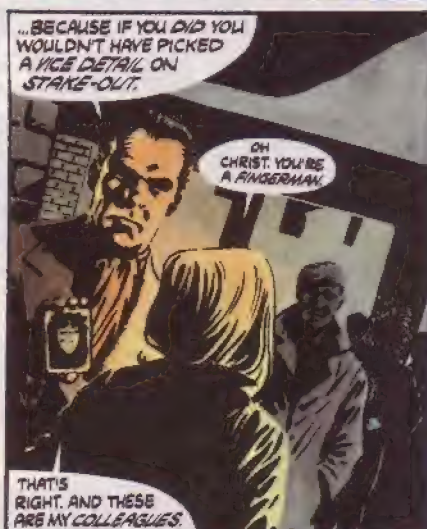
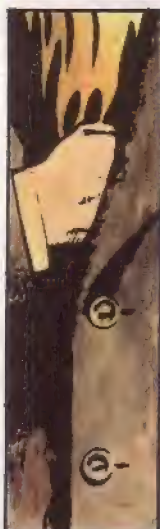
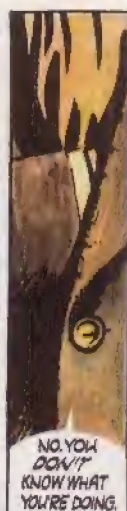




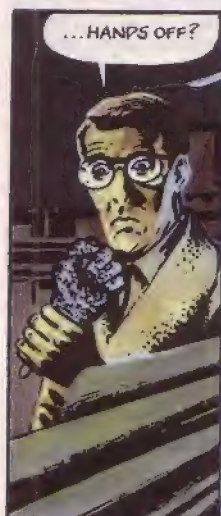
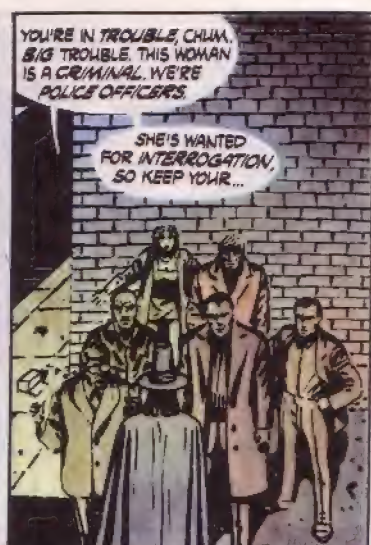
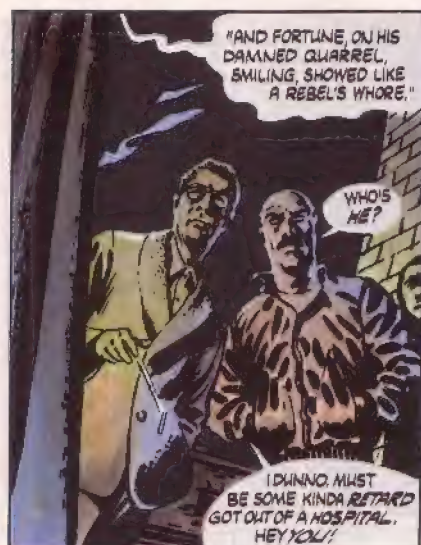
## Chapter One THE VILLAIN

















"REMEMBER, REMEMBER THE FIFTH OF NOVEMBER, THE GUN-POWDER TREASON AND PLOT. I KNOW OF NO REASON WHY THE GUN-POWDER TREASON...



...SHOULD EVER BE FORGOT."



OH OH THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT! THEY'VE... THEY'VE BEEN... DID YOU DO THAT?

I DID THAT.

BUT THAT... THAT'S AGAINST THE LAW! THEY'LL KILL YOU... THEY'LL...



DID YOU REALLY DO THAT?

I REALLY DID THAT. NOW HUSH. THERE'S MORE...



THE RUMBLE OF THE EXPLOSION HAS NOT YET DIED AWAY AS FROM FAR BELOW COMES THE RATTLE OF SMALLER REPORTS...

AND SUDDENLY THE SKY IS ALIGHT WITH...



FIREWORKS! REAL FIREWORKS!

OH GOD THEY'RE SO BEAUTIFUL!

...AND ALL OVER LONDON WINDOWS ARE THROWN OPEN AND FACES LIT WITH AWE AND WONDER GAZE AT THE OMEN SCRAWLED IN FIRE ON THE NIGHT.



THERE, THE OVERTURE IS FINISHED.

COME, WE MUST PREPARE FOR THE FIRST ACT...



ME??

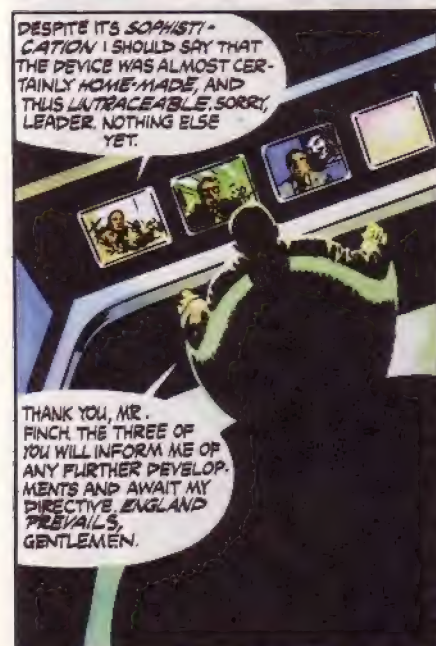
B-BUT...

...OH OKAY.

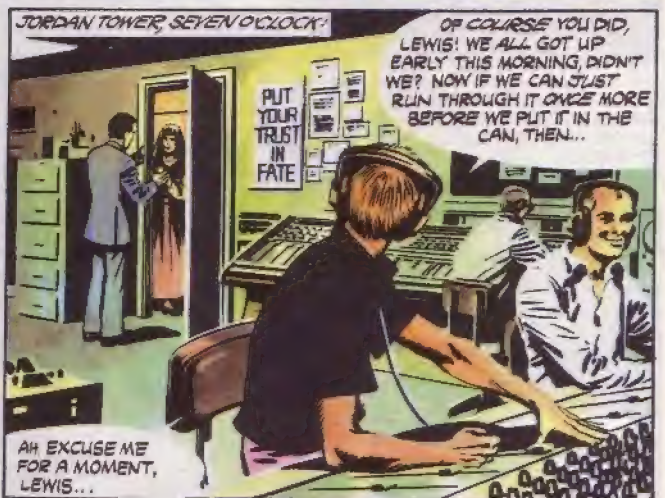
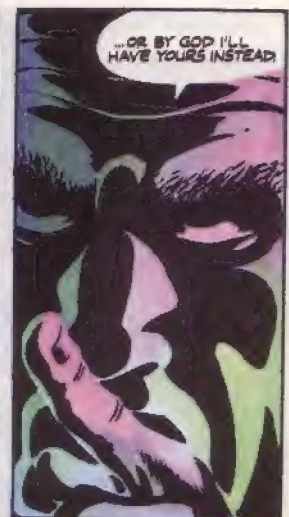
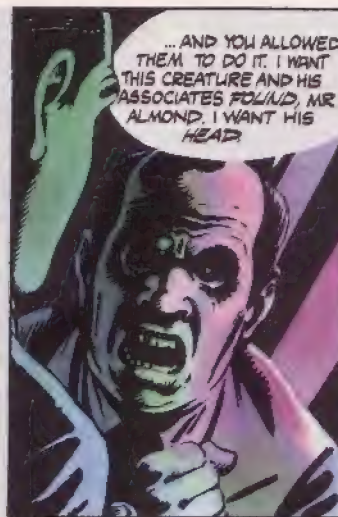
IT IS PRECISELY 12 OF A.M. IT BEGINS TO RAIN...















GOOD MORNING, LONDON. THIS IS THE VOICE OF FATE BROADCASTING ON 275 AND 285 METRES IN THE MEDIUM WAVE...

Chapter Two  
**THE VOICE**



HMM. WHAT ARE YOU SAYING ABOUT THE FIREWORKS?

FATE DOESN'T THINK WE SHOULD MENTION THE FIREWORKS. IF ANYONE ASKS LATER WE'LL SAY IT WAS A FREAK EFFECT OF THE BLAST.



LISTEN TO LEWIS... ISN'T HE MARVELLOUS? IF FATE REALLY HAD A VOICE IT WOULD SOUND JUST LIKE THAT. IF ONLY PEOPLE KNEW WHAT A GOOD JOB HE'S DOING...



DON'T BE STUPID, DASCOMBE. THE WHOLE IDEA IS THAT PEOPLE THINK IT'S FATE TALKING. IT MAKES FATE APPEAR MORE HUMAN. GIVES PEOPLE CONFIDENCE.

HE COLLECTS DOLLS, YOU KNOW. WOULDN'T THINK IT WOULD YOU? BIG MAN LIKE THAT, COLLECTING DOLLS. HE'S SENSITIVE, YOU SEE, YOU CAN TELL BY HIS VOICE.

HHMM...



YES, A LOT OF YOU MEDIA PEOPLE ARE "SENSITIVE," AREN'T YOU? I DON'T KNOW WHY THE LEADER TOLERATES YOU.

MY DEAR DEREK... THE LEADER IS THE MOST SENSITIVE OF US ALL.

...IN FACT, WHEN YOU'D FINISHED EXPLAINING HOW A LONE LUNATIC COULD KILL THREE FINGERMEN AND BLOW UP PARLIAMENT I SHOULD IMAGINE HE WAS VERY SENSITIVE.



YOU'RE A DEGENERATE, DASCOMBE.



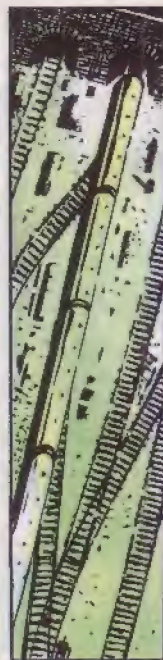
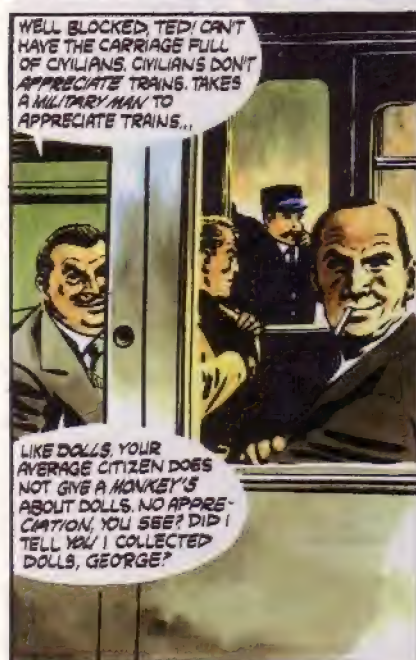
YOU'RE BITTER, ALMOND.

"BITTER ALMOND?" OH DEAR ME! HA HA HA HA HA!

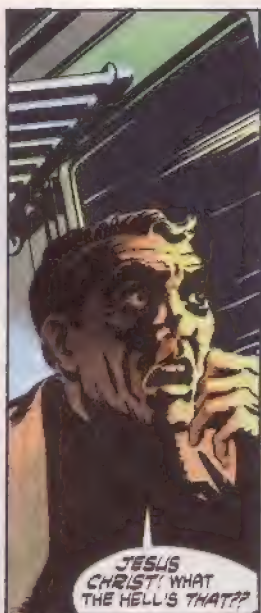








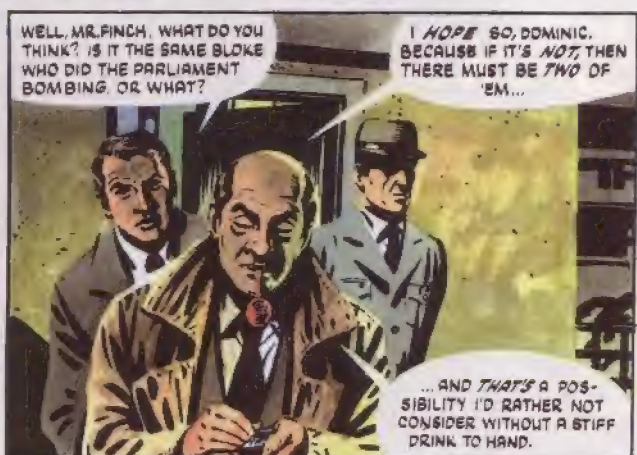
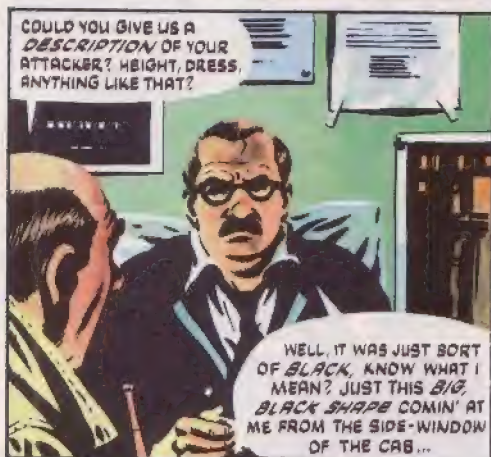




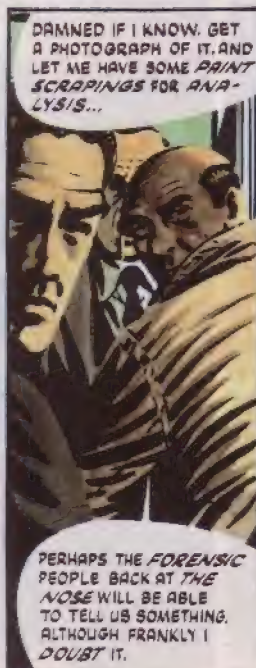
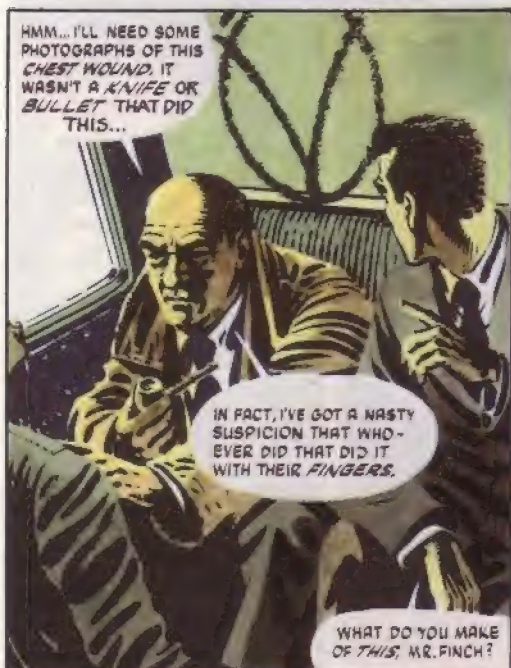
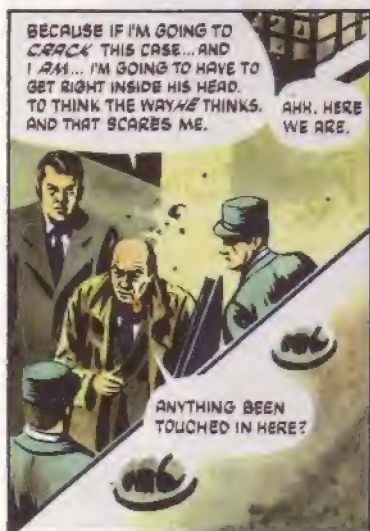
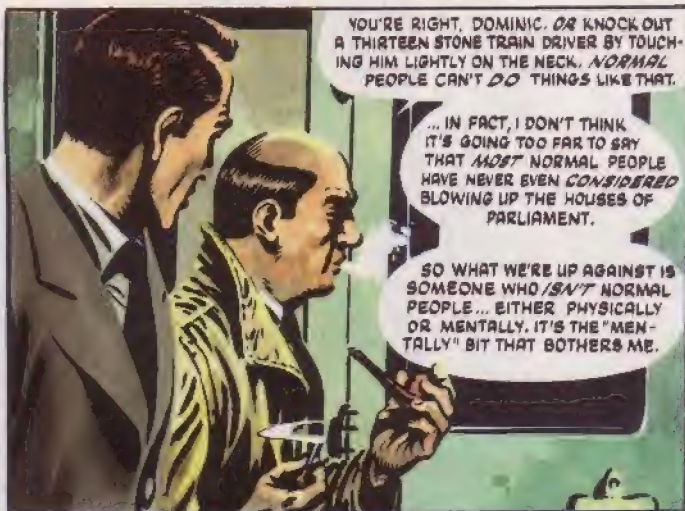




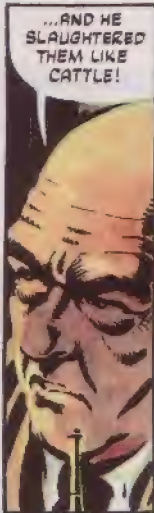
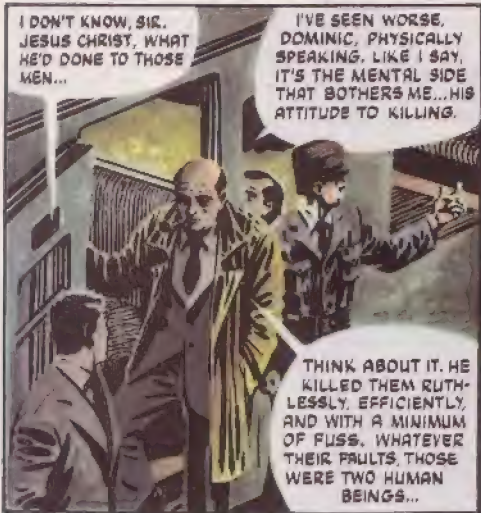
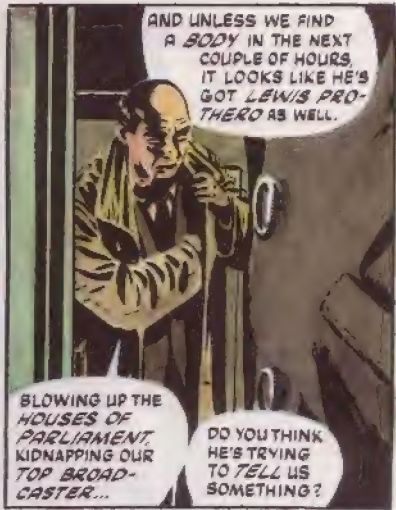




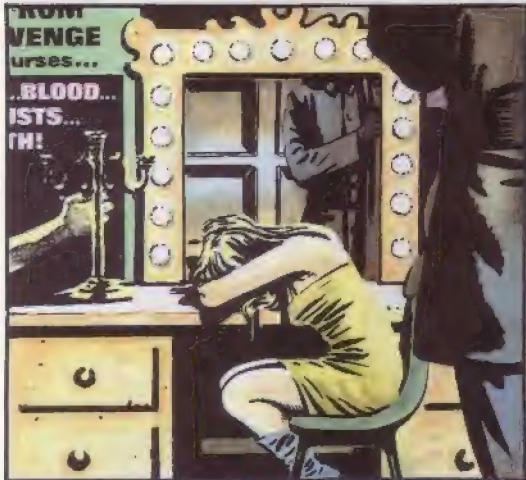








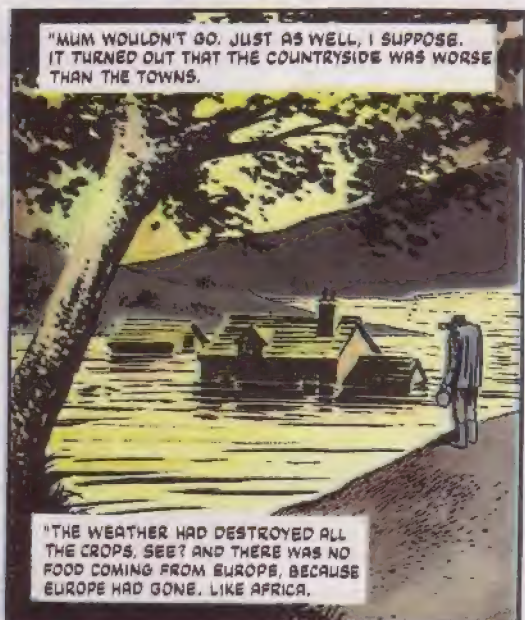
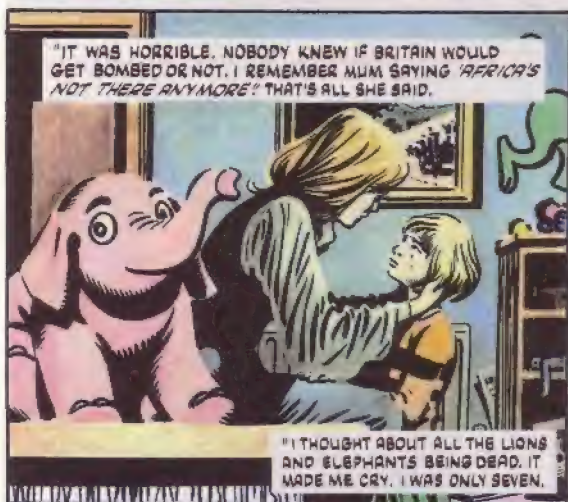
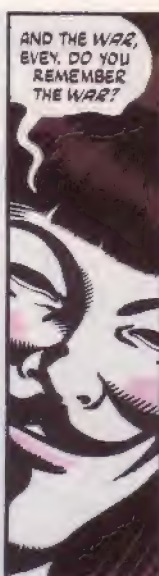














"I-I DIDN'T LIKE TO THINK ABOUT THE NEXT FOUR YEARS. WE'D GOT TOGETHER WITH SOME NEIGHBOURS IN A PROTECTION COMMITTEE. IT DIDN'T HELP MUCH..."

"THERE WAS NO FOOD. AND THE SEWERS WERE FLOODED AND EVERYBODY GOT SICK. MUM DIED IN 1991. DAD WOULDN'T LET ME SEE HER."

"THERE WERE RIOTS, AND PEOPLE WITH GUNS. NOBODY KNEW WHAT WAS GOING ON. EVERYONE WAS WAITING FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO DO SOMETHING..."

"BUT THERE WASN'T ANY GOVERNMENT ANYMORE. JUST LOTS OF LITTLE GANGS. ALL TRYING TO TAKE OVER. AND THEN IN 1992, SOMEBODY FINALLY DID..."

"IT WAS ALL THE FASCIST GROUPS, THE RIGHT-WINGERS. THEY'D ALL GOT TOGETHER WITH SOME OF THE BIG CORPORATIONS THAT HAD SURVIVED. 'NORSEFIRE' THEY CALLED THEMSELVES."

"I REMEMBER WHEN THEY MARCHED INTO LONDON. THEY HAD A FLAG WITH THEIR SYMBOL ON. EVERYONE WAS CHEERING. I THOUGHT THEY WERE SCARY."

"THEY SOON GOT THINGS UNDER CONTROL. BUT THEN THEY STARTED TAKING PEOPLE AWAY... ALL THE BLACK PEOPLE AND THE PAKISTANIS..."

"WHITE PEOPLE, TOO. ALL THE RADICALS AND THE MEN WHO, YOU KNOW, LIKED OTHER MEN. THE HOMOSEXUALS. I DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY DID WITH THEM ALL."

"DAD HAD BEEN IN A SOCIALIST GROUP WHEN HE WAS YOUNGER. THEY CAME FOR HIM ONE SEPTEMBER MORNING IN 1993..."

"IT WAS MY BIRTHDAY. I WAS TWELVE. I NEVER SAW HIM AGAIN."

"THEY MADE ME GO AND WORK IN A FACTORY WITH A LOT OF OTHER KIDS. WE WERE PUTTING MATCHES INTO BOXES."

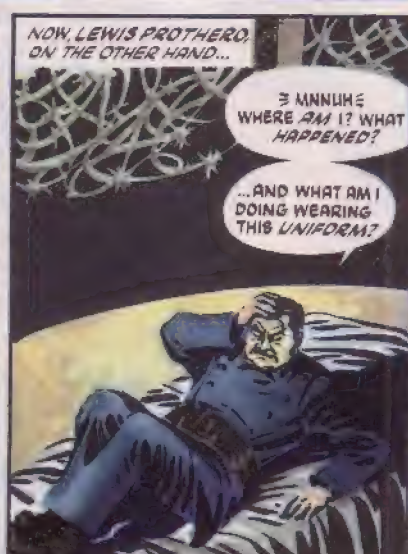
"I LIVED IN A HOSTEL. IT WAS COLD AND DIRTY AND I JUST USED TO CRY ALL THE TIME. I WANTED MY DAD."

"...THAT'S HOW IT WAS FOR FOUR YEARS... NOT ENOUGH FOOD. NOT ENOUGH MONEY. SOME OF THE OLDER GIRLS MADE MONEY GOING WITH MEN."

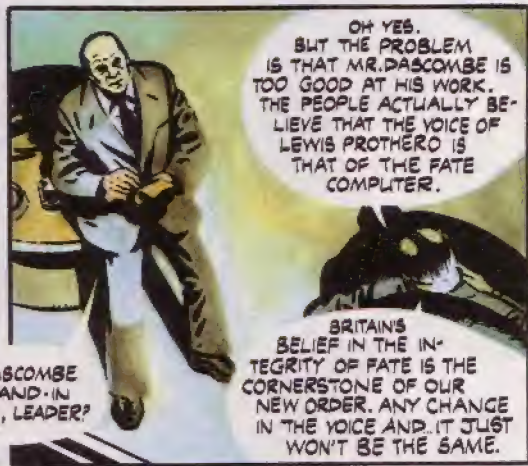
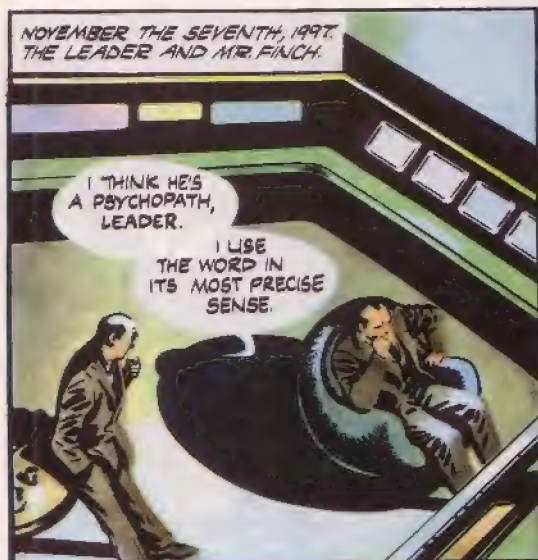
"THAT'S WHAT I WAS GOING TO DO, LAST NIGHT. BUT THEY WERE FINGERMEN. THEY WERE GOING... THEY WERE G-GOING TO..."

"THEY WERE GOING TO RUH... RUH... RUH..."

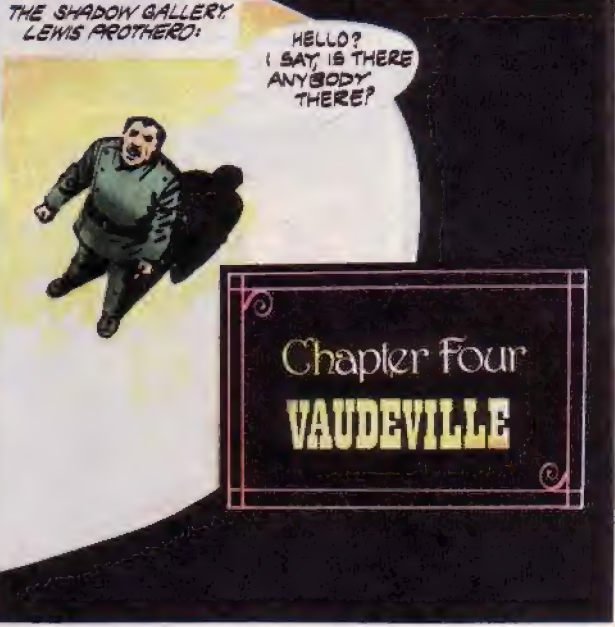
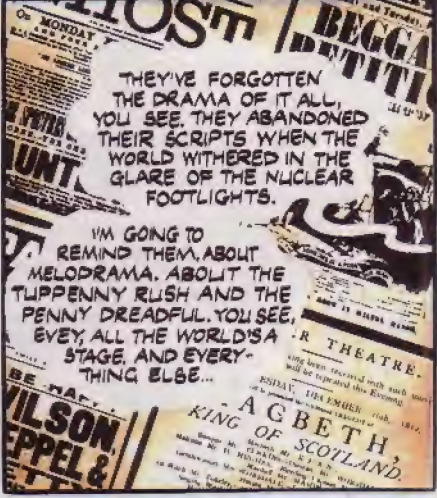
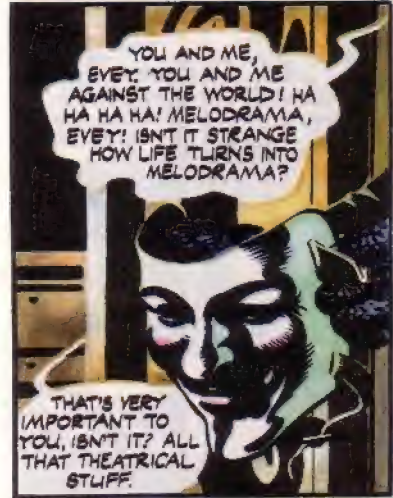




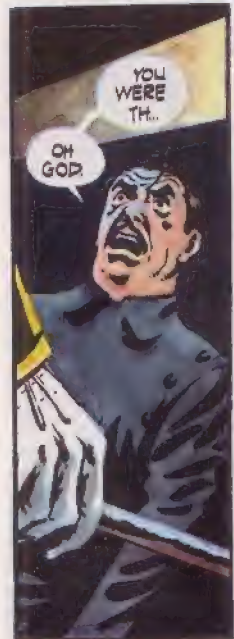
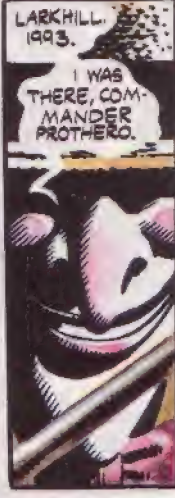
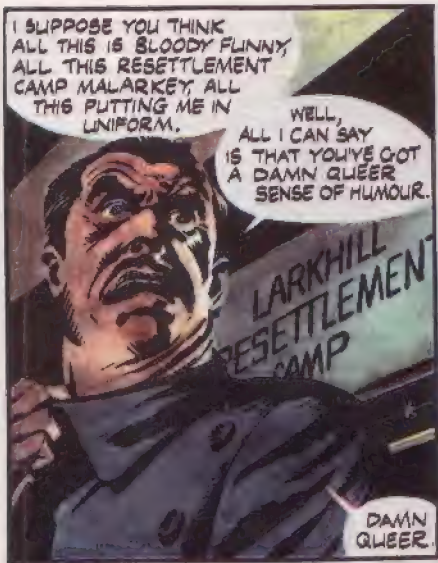
















AND THERE THEY WERE...



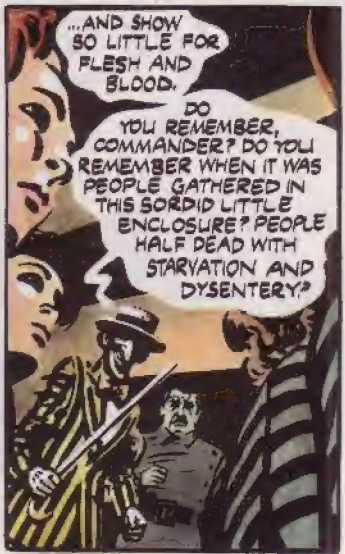
MY DOLLS. THAT'S PART OF MY DOLL COLLECTION. HOW DID YOU... THEY WERE ALL SAFELY LOCKED AWAY WHEN I LEFT FOR WORK YESTERDAY...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH MY DOLLS?



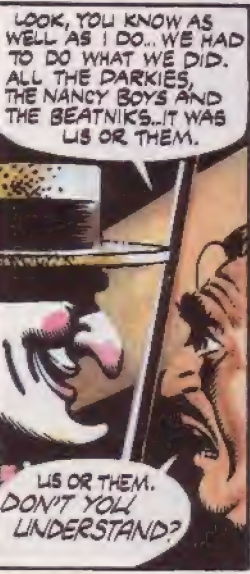
MY GOD, IF YOU'VE DAMAGED ANY OF THEM... THEY'RE PRICELESS! HARDLY ANY OF THE BIG COLLECTIONS SURVIVED THE WAR. IF YOU'VE DAMAGED THEM...

ADMIRABLE CONCERN, COMMANDER... YET IT'S DEUCED ODD, ISN'T IT? HOW YOU CAN SHOW SO MUCH CONCERN FOR PORCELAIN AND PLASTIC...



...AND SHOW SO LITTLE FOR FLESH AND BLOOD.

DO YOU REMEMBER, COMMANDER? DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN IT WAS PEOPLE GATHERED IN THIS SORDID LITTLE ENCLOSURE? PEOPLE HALF DEAD WITH STARVATION AND DYSENTERY?



LOOK, YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO... WE HAD TO DO WHAT WE DID. ALL THE DARKIES, THE NANCY BOYS AND THE BEATNIKS... IT WAS US OR THEM.

US OR THEM. DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?



PERFECTLY. COME ALONG, COMMANDER. YOUR TOUR ISN'T OVER YET. THERE ARE STILL THE SPECIAL PRISONERS TO SEE. THE ONES IN THE MEDICAL COMPOUND

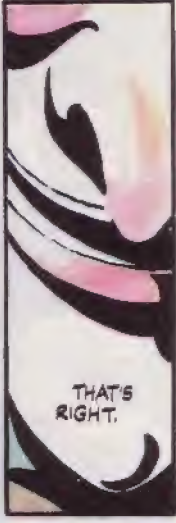


JUST ALONG HERE. THIS IS WHERE YOU KEPT THE ONES WHO'D TAKEN PART IN YOUR SCIENTISTS... EXPERIMENTS, I BELIEVE THEY USED TO CALL THEM.

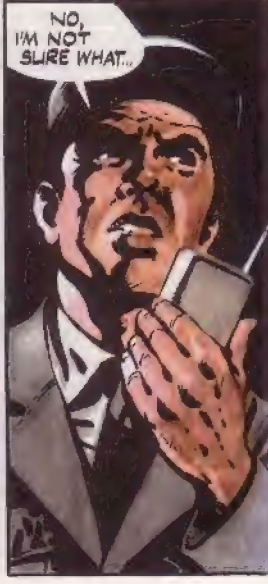
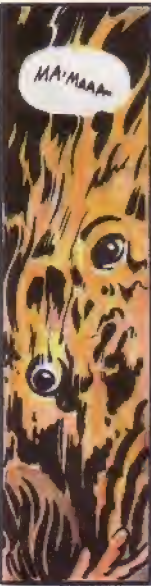
YOU HAD TO WALK PAST THIS ROW OF DOORS EVERY NIGHT. ROOM ONE, ROOM TWO, ROOM THREE...

...ROOM FOUR...

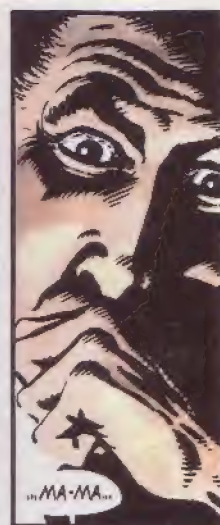
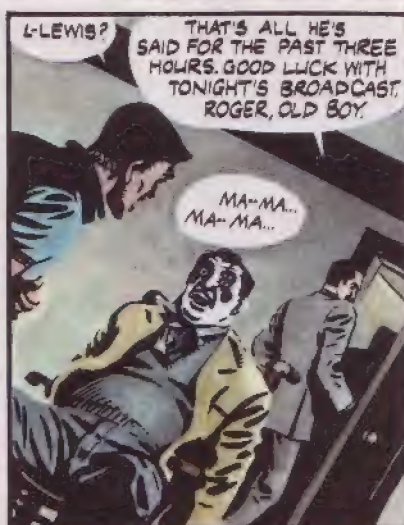




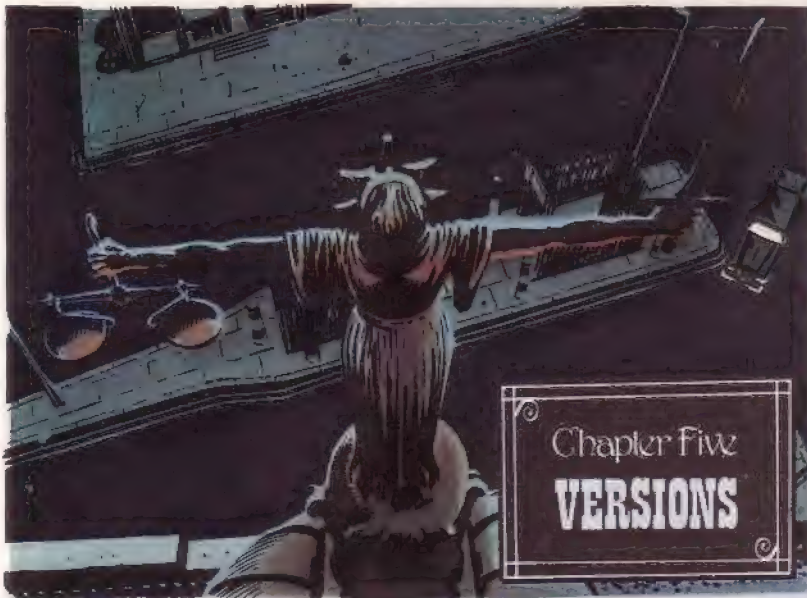






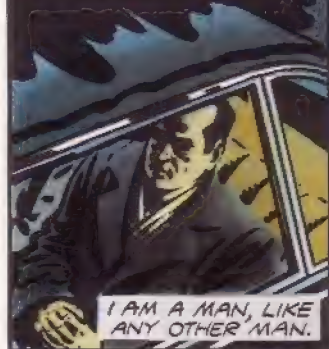






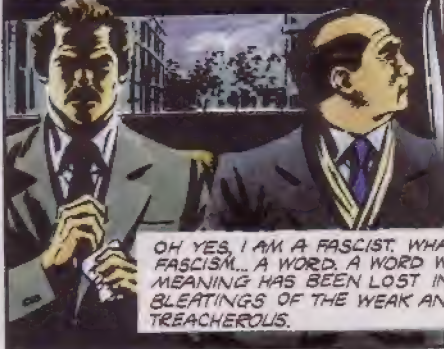
MY NAME IS ADAM SUSAN.  
I AM THE LEADER.

LEADER OF THE LOST,  
RULER OF THE RUINS.



I AM A MAN, LIKE  
ANY OTHER MAN.

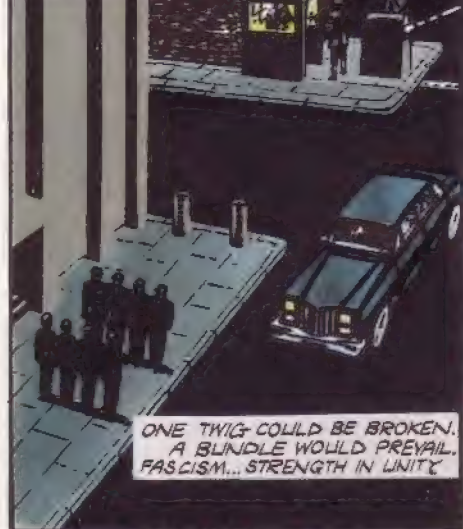
I LEAD THE COUNTRY THAT I LOVE OUT OF  
THE WILDERNESS OF THE TWENTIETH  
CENTURY. I BELIEVE IN SURVIVAL, IN THE  
DESTINY OF THE NORDIC RACE. I BELIEVE  
IN FASCISM.



OH YES, I AM A FASCIST. WHAT OF IT?  
FASCISM... A WORD. A WORD WHOSE  
MEANING HAS BEEN LOST IN THE  
BLEATINGS OF THE WEAK AND THE  
TREACHEROUS.



THE ROMANS INVENTED FASCISM.  
A BUNDLE OF BOUND TWIGS  
WAS ITS SYMBOL.



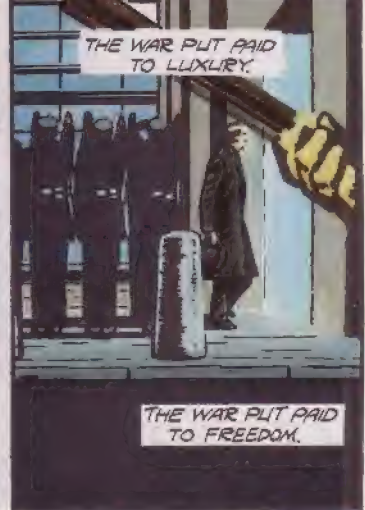
ONE TWIG COULD BE BROKEN.  
A BUNDLE WOULD PREVAIL.  
FASCISM... STRENGTH IN UNITY.



I BELIEVE IN STRENGTH.  
I BELIEVE  
IN UNITY.

AND IF THAT STRENGTH, THAT  
UNITY OF PURPOSE, DEMANDS  
A UNIFORMITY OF THOUGHT,  
WORD AND DEED THEN SO BE IT.

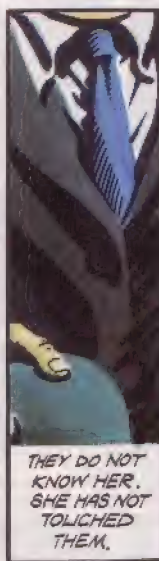
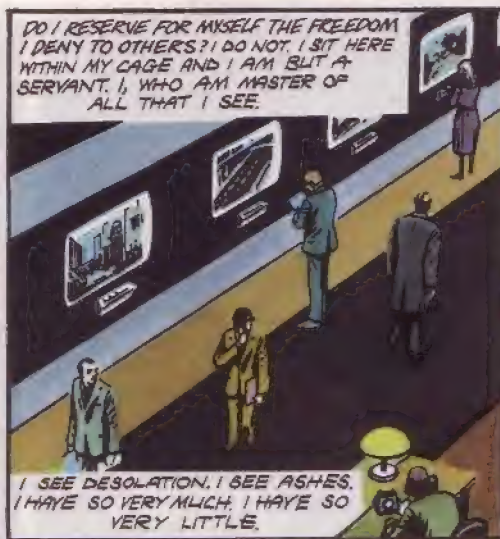
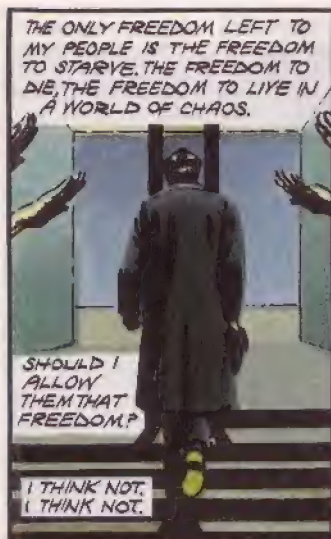
I WILL NOT HEAR TALK OF FREEDOM.  
I WILL NOT HEAR TALK OF INDIVIDUAL  
LIBERTY. THEY ARE LUXURIES.  
I DO NOT BELIEVE IN LUXURIES.



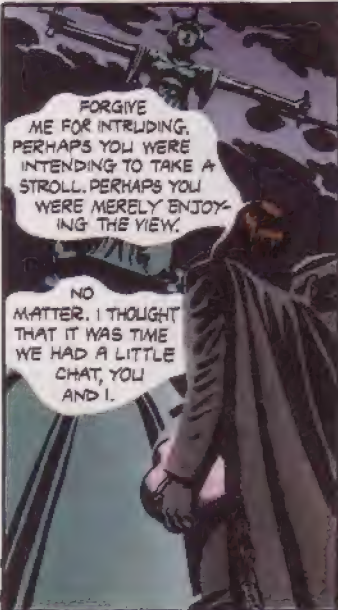
THE WAR PUT PAID  
TO LUXURY.

THE WAR PUT PAID  
TO FREEDOM.

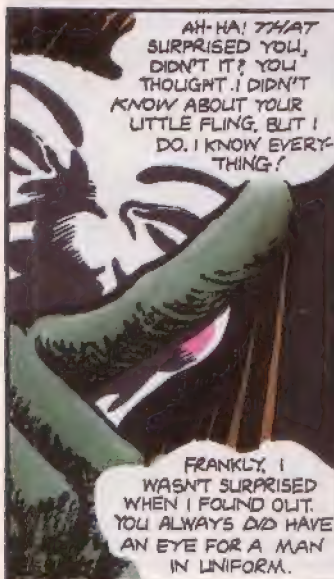
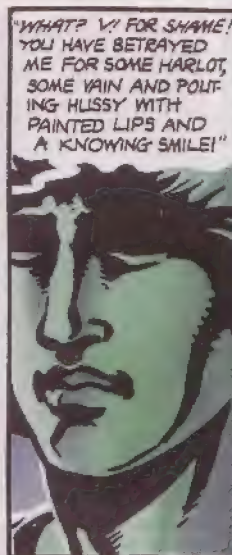
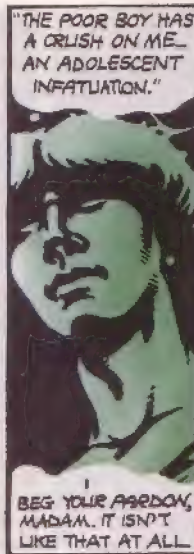




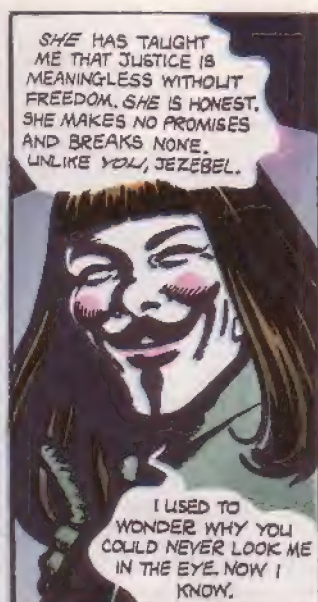




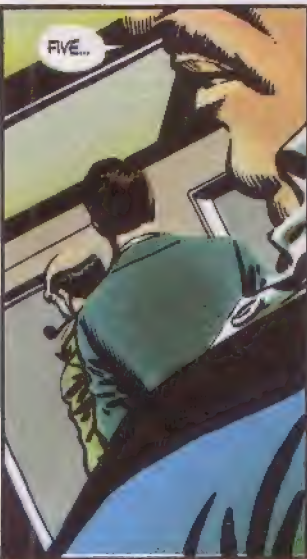
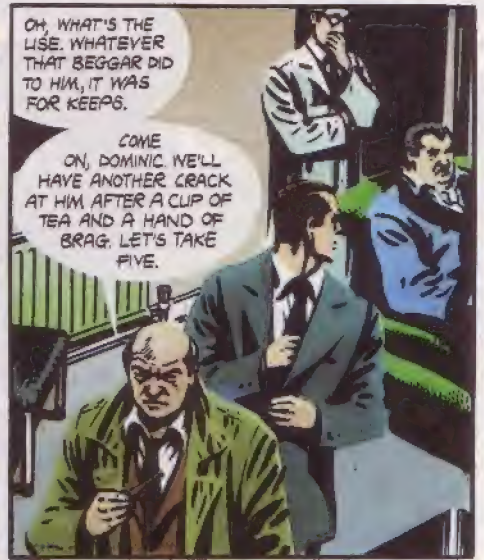




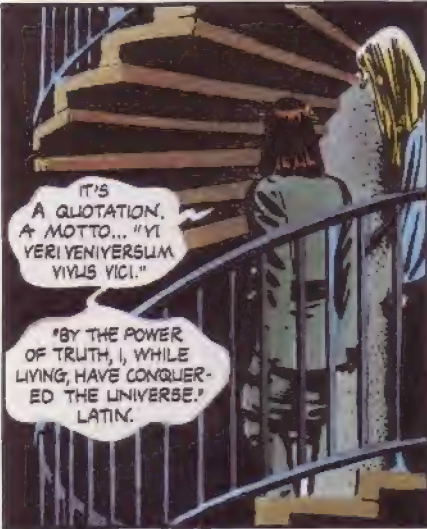




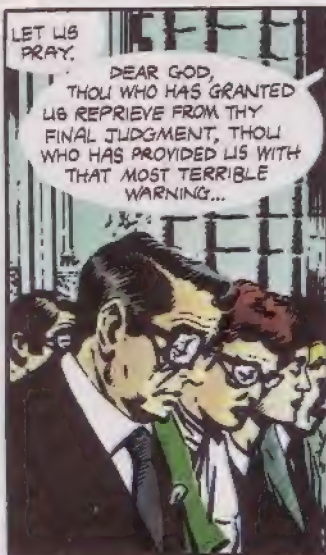




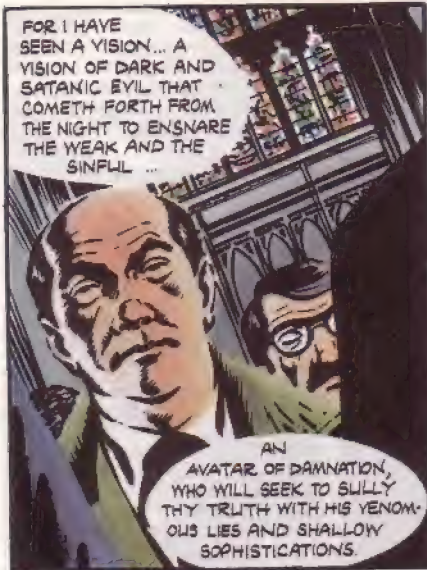






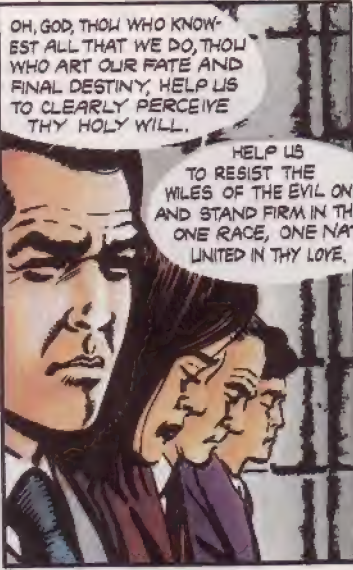






FOR I HAVE SEEN A VISION... A VISION OF DARK AND SATANIC EVIL THAT COMETH FORTH FROM THE NIGHT TO ENSNARE THE WEAK AND THE SINFUL ...

AN AVATAR OF DAMNATION, WHO WILL SEEK TO SULLY THY TRUTH WITH HIS VENOMOUS LIES AND SHALLOW SOPHISTICATIONS.



OH, GOD, THOU WHO KNOWEST ALL THAT WE DO, THOU WHO ART OUR FATE AND FINAL DESTINY, HELP US TO CLEARLY PERCEIVE THY HOLY WILL.

HELP US TO RESIST THE WILES OF THE EVIL ONE AND STAND FIRM IN THEE. ONE RACE, ONE NATION, UNITED IN THY LOVE.



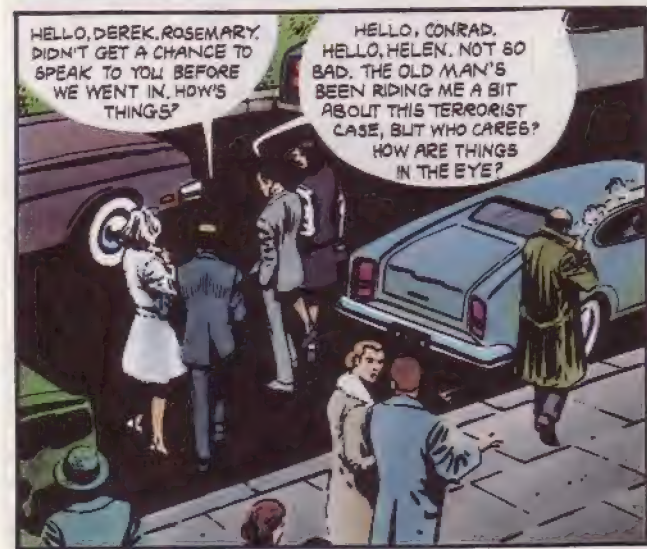
THIS WE ASK IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST.

THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, OUR LORD

AMEN



Chapter Six  
THE VISION



HELLO, DEREK. ROSEMARY, DIDN'T GET A CHANCE TO SPEAK TO YOU BEFORE WE WENT IN. HOW'S THINGS?

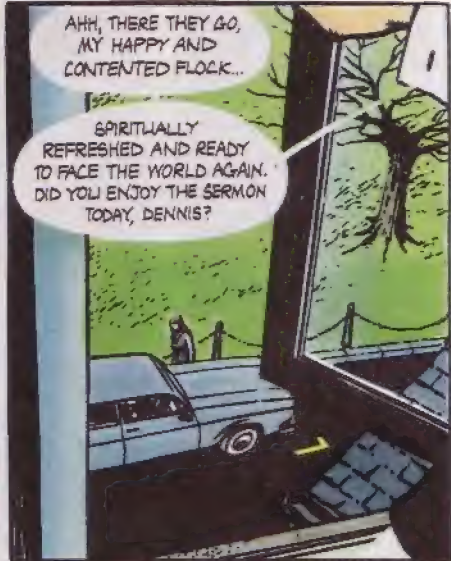
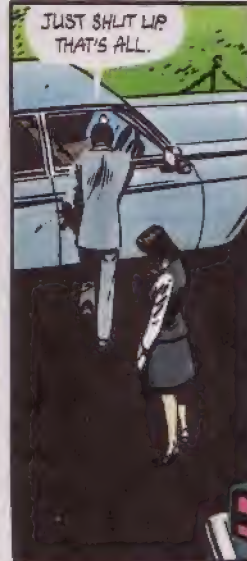
HELLO, CONRAD. HELLO, HELEN. NOT SO BAD. THE OLD MAN'S BEEN RIDING ME A BIT ABOUT THIS TERRORIST CASE, BUT WHO CARES? HOW ARE THINGS IN THE EYE?



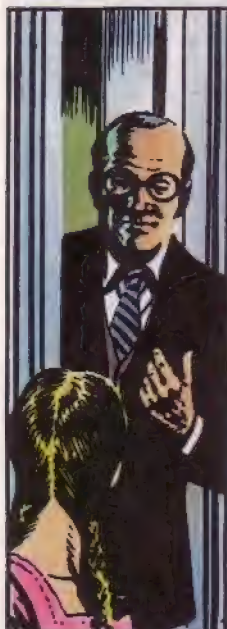
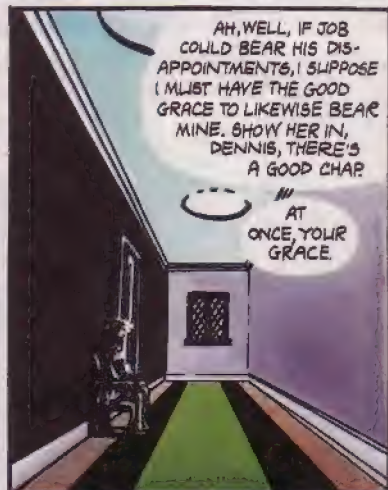
WELL, WE'VE HAD A FEW TECHNICAL PROBLEMS WITH THE MARK IX RECORDERS, BUT...

OH, CONRAD, DON'T BE SUCH A BLOODY SORE. TELL US ABOUT THE TERRORIST, DEREK. IS IT TRUE HE BLEW UP THE OLD BAILEY?





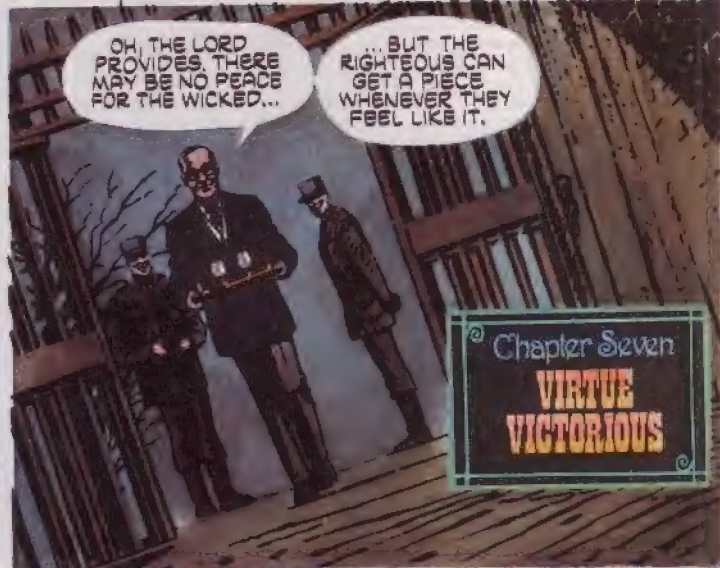
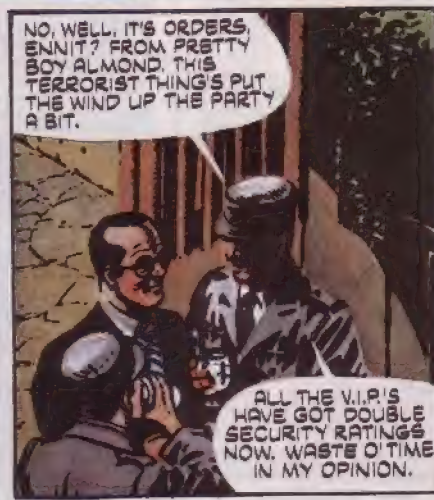
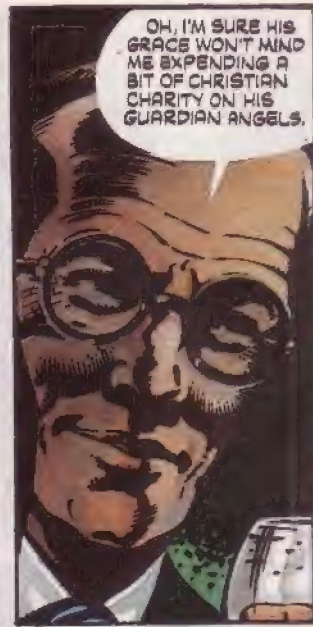
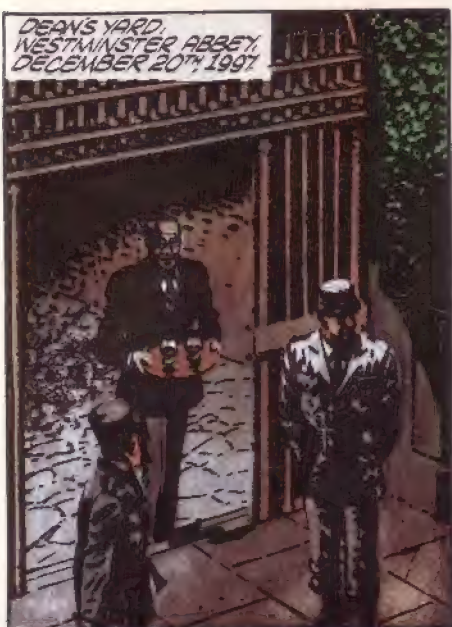






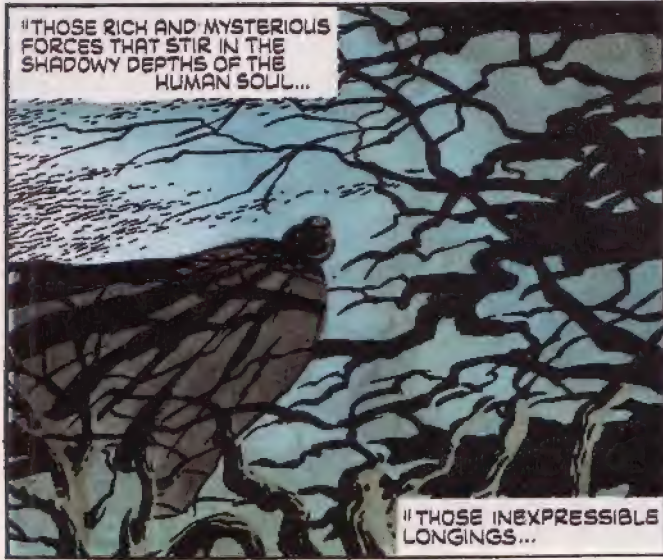
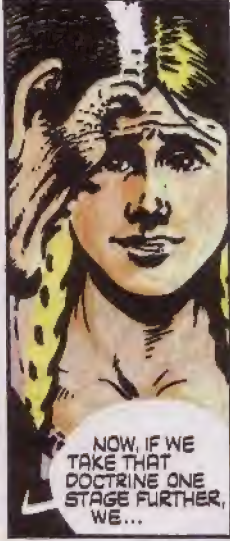




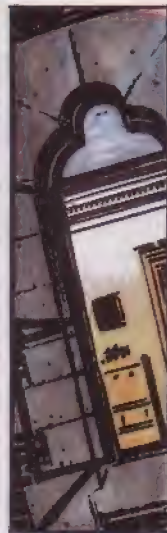
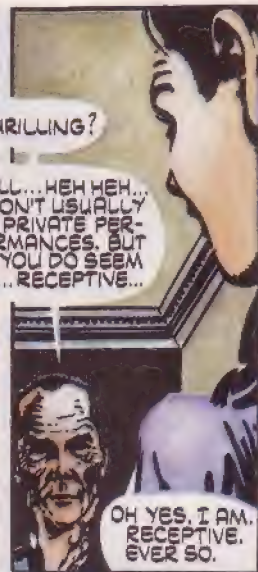


Chapter Seven  
**VIRTUE  
VICTORIOUS**









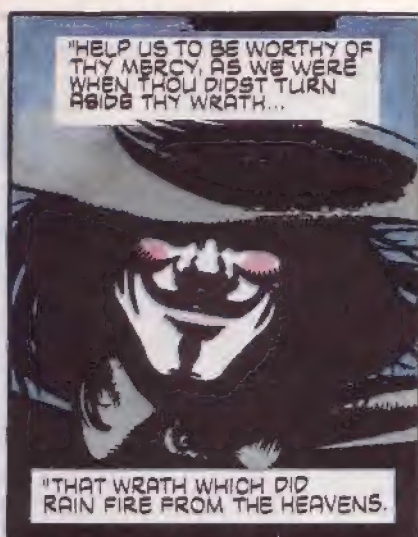




"DEAR GOD..."



"THOU WHO HAS GRANTED US  
REPRIEVE FROM THY FINAL JUDG-  
MENT, THOU WHO HAS PROVIDED  
US WITH THAT MOST TERRIBLE  
WARNING..."

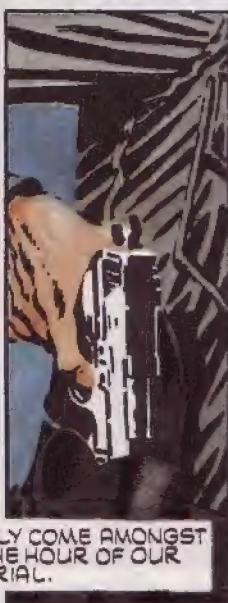


"HELP US TO BE WORTHY OF  
THY MERCY, AS WE WERE  
WHEN THOU DIDST TURN  
ASIDE THY WRATH..."

"THAT WRATH WHICH DID  
RAIN FIRE FROM THE HEAVENS."



"HELP US TO RESIST THE  
TEMPTATIONS OF THE EVIL ONE..."



"WHO IS SURELY COME AMONGST  
US IN THIS, THE HOUR OF OUR  
GREATEST TRIAL."



"FOR I HAVE SEEN  
A VISION..."



"A VISION OF DARK  
AND SATANIC EVIL  
THAT COMETH  
FORTH FROM THE  
NIGHT TO ENSNARE  
THE WEAK AND  
THE SINFUL..."



"AN AVATAR OF DAMNATION, WHO  
WILL SEEK TO SULLY THY TRUTH  
WITH HIS VAIN LIES AND SHALLOW  
SOPHISTICATIONS."

"OH GOD, THOU  
WHO KNOWEST  
ALL THAT WE  
DO..."



"THOU WHO ART OUR  
FATE AND OUR FINAL  
DESTINY..."



HELP US TO CLEARLY  
PERCEIVE THY WILL.

"HELP US TO PERCEIVE THE WILES OF  
THE EVIL ONE AND STAND FIRM IN THEE.  
ONE RACE, ONE NATION, UNITED IN THY  
LOVE."



"THIS WE ASK IN  
THE NAME OF  
THE FATHER..."



"AND OF THE SON..."



"AND OF THE HOLY  
GHOST."

AMEN.



TAKE YOUR  
DRESS OFF,  
PLEASE.

WHAT??

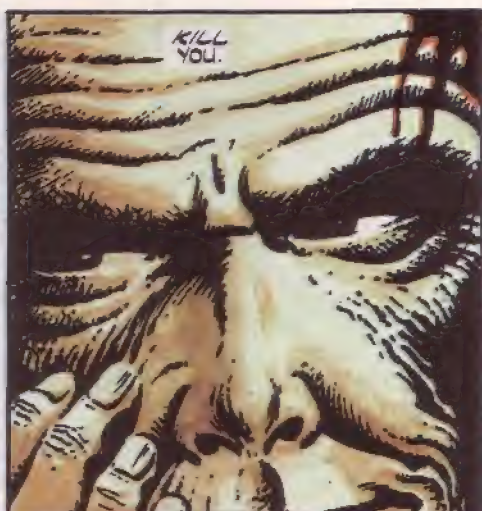
BUT, LOOK!  
UH, I WAS...



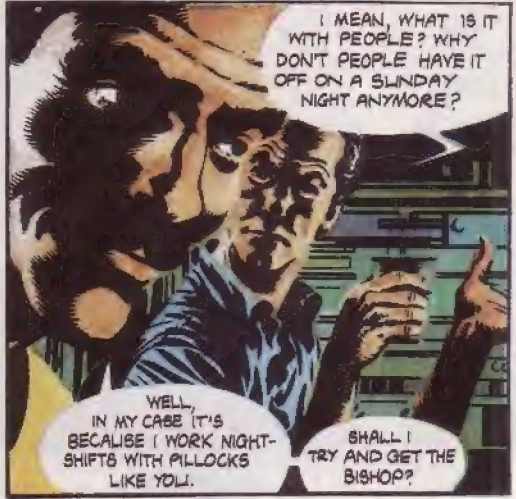
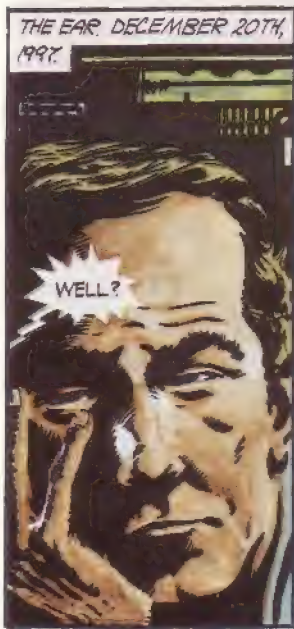
OH NEVER MIND.  
ALLOW ME TO...



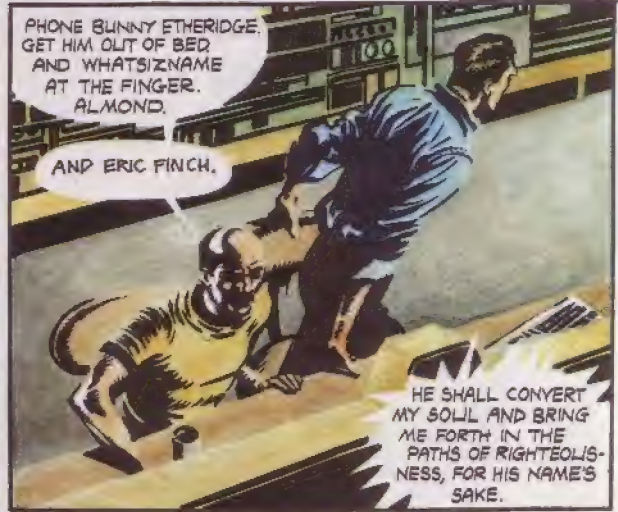




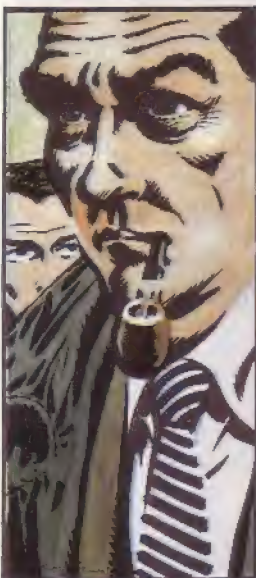
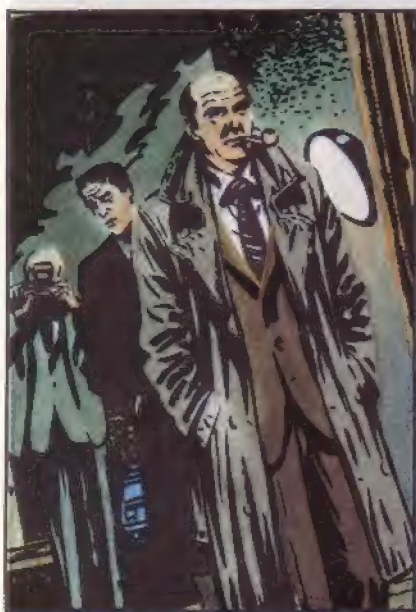
















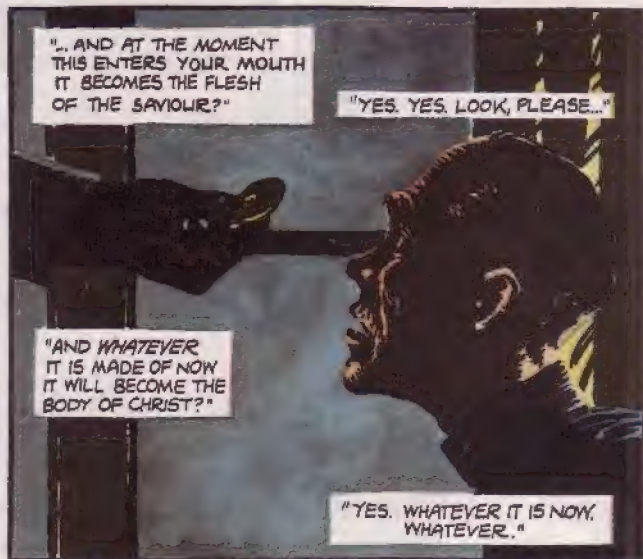




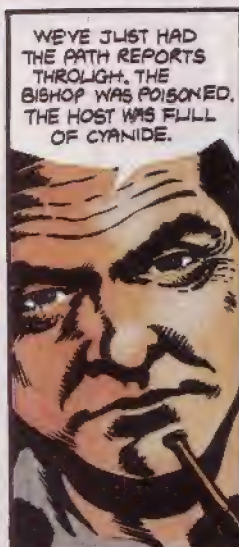














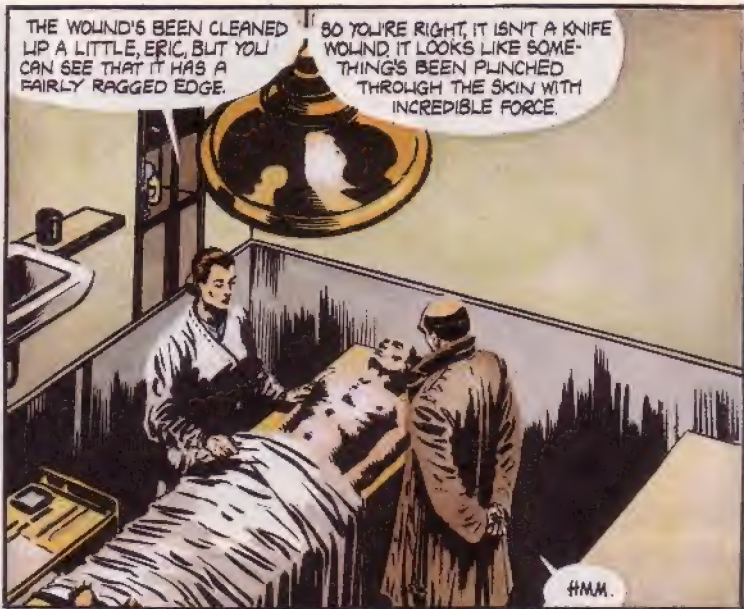
THE NOSE, NEW SCOTLAND YARD.  
DECEMBER 23<sup>RD</sup>, 1997.



THERE...

THE WOUND'S BEEN CLEANED UP A LITTLE, ERIC, BUT YOU CAN SEE THAT IT HAS A FAIRLY RAGGED EDGE.

SO YOU'RE RIGHT, IT ISN'T A KNIFE WOUND. IT LOOKS LIKE SOMETHING'S BEEN PUNCHED THROUGH THE SKIN WITH INCREDIBLE FORCE.



HMM.

AHH, WELL, THANKS FOR THE HELP, DELIA. ME AND THE LAD ARE SITTING UP WITH THIS CASE TONIGHT. YOU'VE GIVEN US SOMETHING ELSE TO CHEW OVER.

SOUNDS LIKE YOU'VE ALREADY BITTEN OFF ENOUGH TO RUIN YOUR CHRISTMAS. DIDN'T DOMINIC TELL ME THAT YOU WERE GOING TO CONSULT FATE?



MM, THE LEADER'S AUTHORIZED AN EXTENSION LINK FOR ME. THINGS MUST BE DESPERATE. HE'S USUALLY FUNNY ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE USING FATE...



OOH, DELIA... BEFORE I FORGET...



CAN YOU TELL US ANYTHING ABOUT THIS? WE FOUND TWO OF THEM... ONE IN THE CARRIAGE WHEN HE GRABBED LEWIS PROTHERO...

IT'S A VIOLET CARSON. I'D HEARD THAT STRAIN HAD DIED SINCE THE WAR. THOUGHT A BOTANIST MIGHT BE ABLE TO SHED SOME LIGHT ON IT...

THE OTHER IN THE BISHOP'S ROOM...



WHY... YES, YES OF COURSE, I'M KNOCKING OFF IN A FEW MINUTES, BLIT...

PERHAPS I COULD TAKE IT HOME...

MAGIC. SEE YOU TO-MORROW THEN, DELIA. 'BYE.



'BYE.



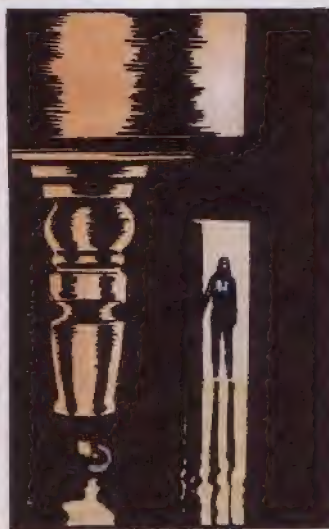




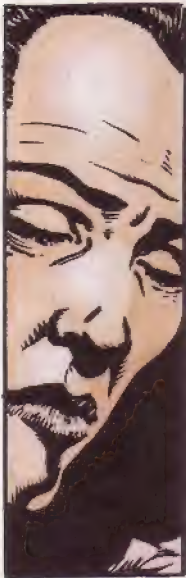




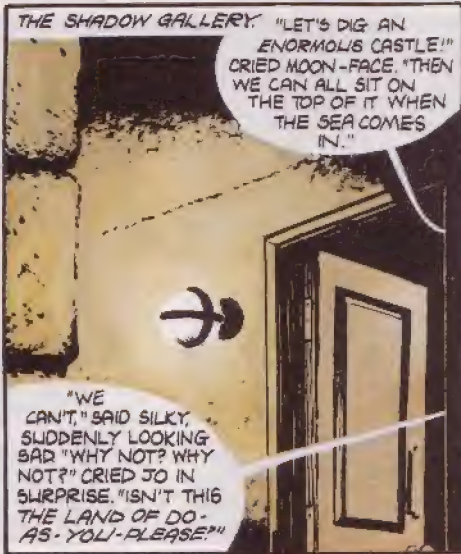




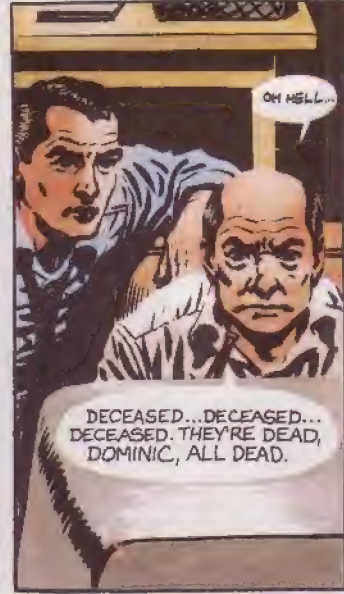
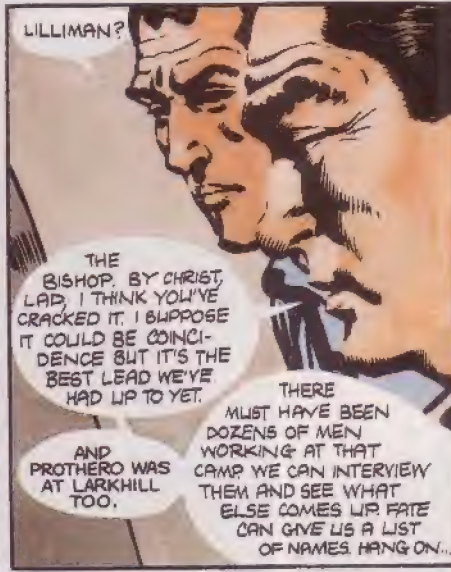
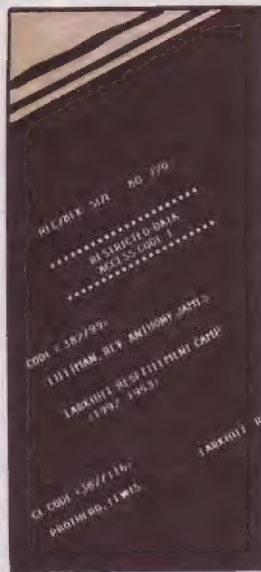
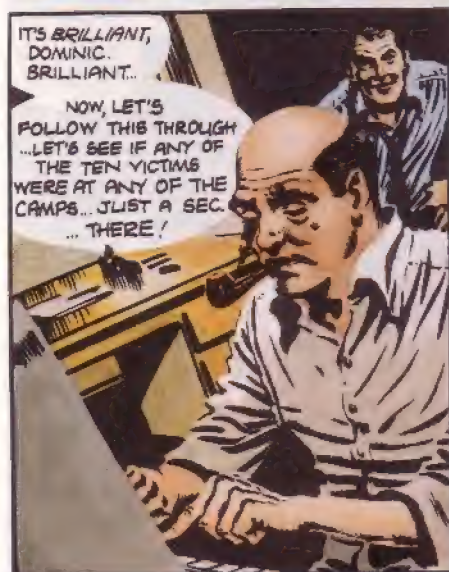
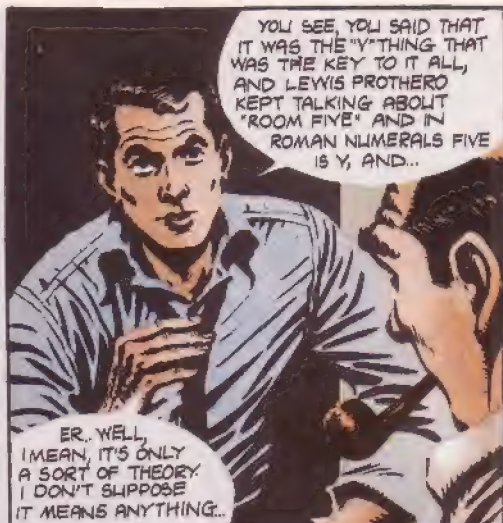
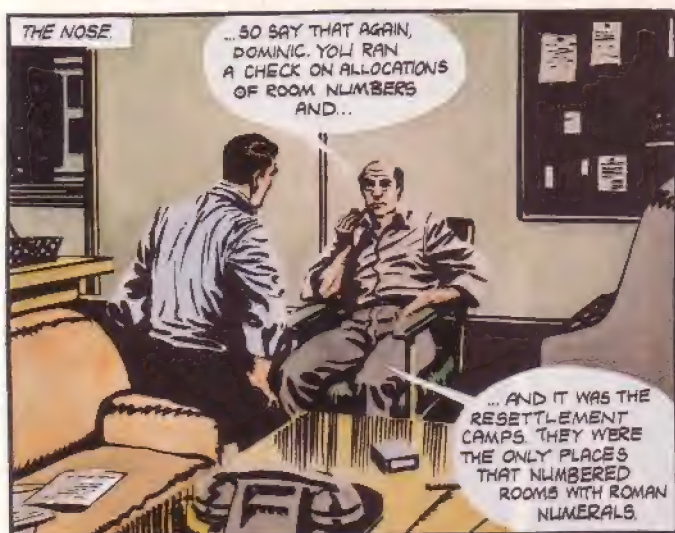








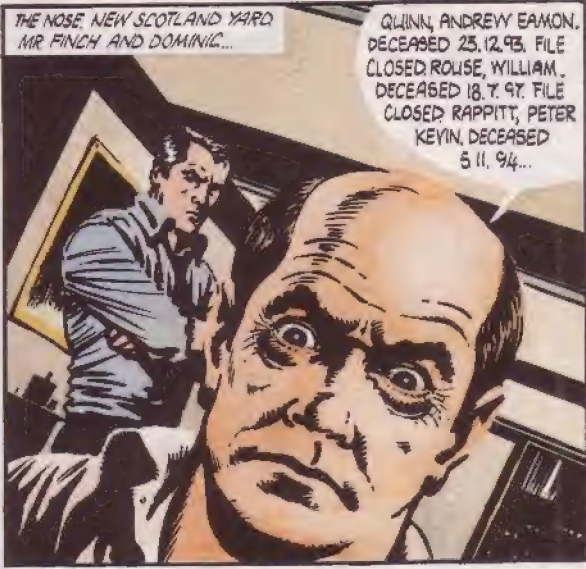




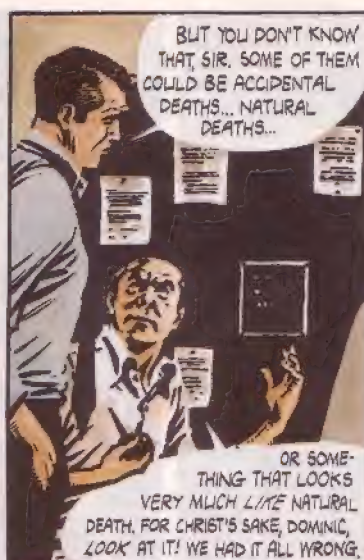




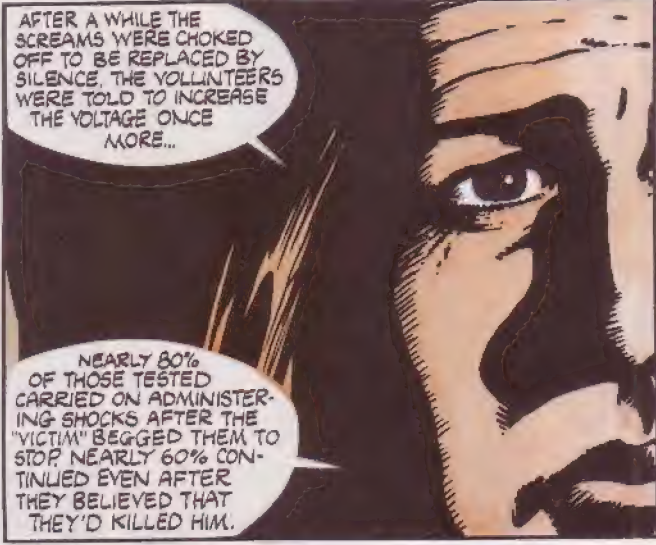
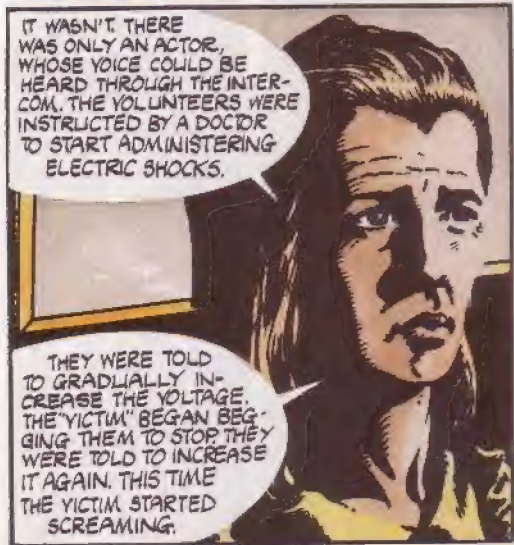












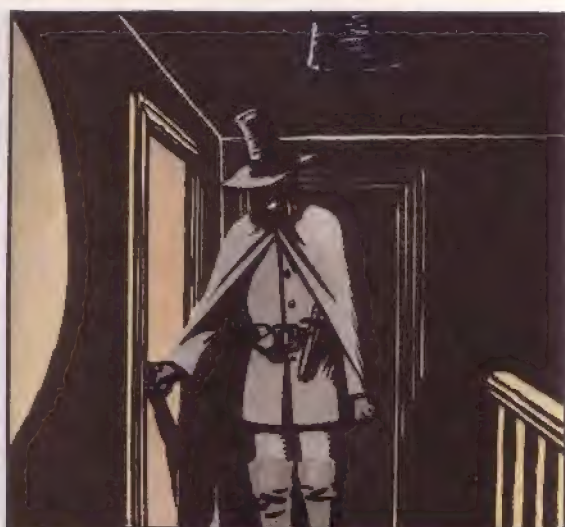








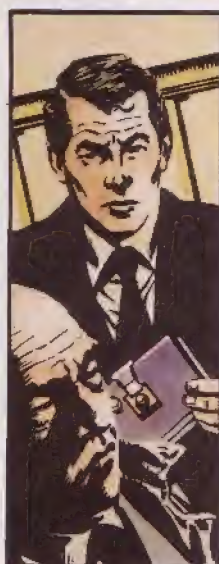








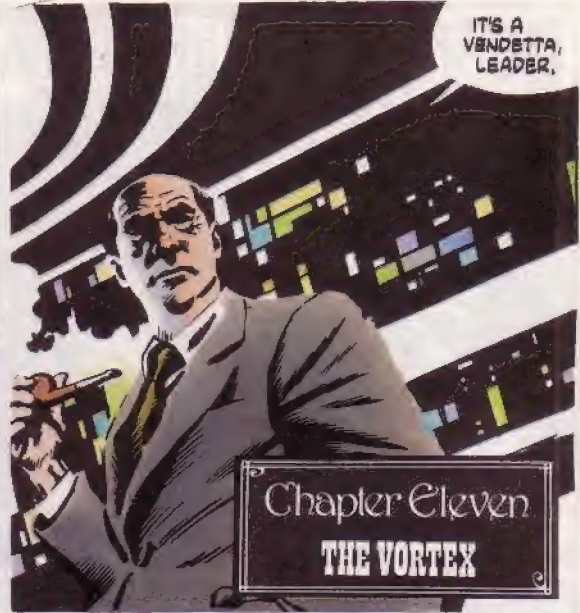
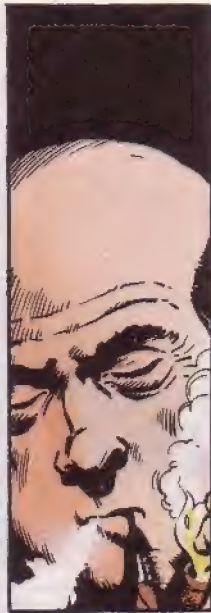






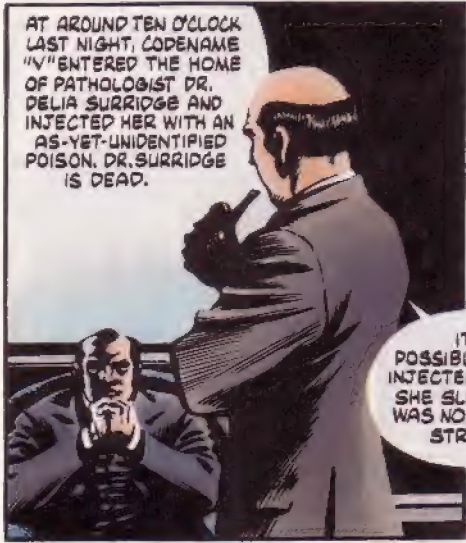


DECEMBER 26TH, 1997. 10:58 PM.  
MR. FINCH REPORTS:



IT'S A  
VENDETTA,  
LEADER.

Chapter Eleven  
THE VORTEX



AT AROUND TEN O'CLOCK  
LAST NIGHT, CODENAME  
"V" ENTERED THE HOME  
OF PATHOLOGIST DR.  
DELIA SURRIDGE AND  
INJECTED HER WITH AN  
AS-YET-UNIDENTIFIED  
POISON. DR. SURRIDGE  
IS DEAD.

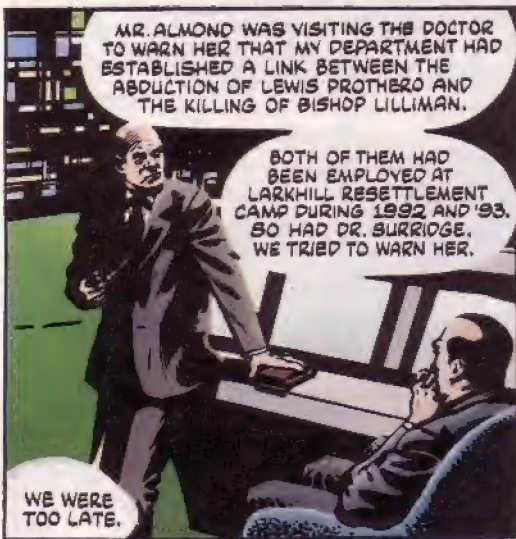
IT IS  
POSSIBLE THAT HE  
INJECTED HER WHILE  
SHE SLEPT. THERE  
WAS NO SIGN OF A  
STRUGGLE.



BEFORE HE COULD LEAVE  
THE PREMISES, CODENAME  
"V" WAS SURPRISED BY THE  
ARRIVAL OF MR. ALMOND.  
MR. ALMOND WAS ARMED  
WITH A REVOLVER.

APPARENTLY HE  
HAD FORGOTTEN TO  
LOAD IT. CODENAME  
"V" STRUCK MR. ALMOND  
WITH AN EDGED  
IMPLEMENT,  
PROBABLY A KNIFE.

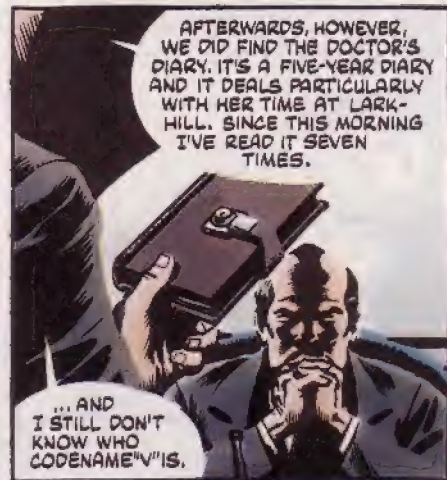
MR.  
ALMOND IS  
ALSO DEAD.



MR. ALMOND WAS VISITING THE DOCTOR  
TO WARN HER THAT MY DEPARTMENT HAD  
ESTABLISHED A LINK BETWEEN THE  
ABDUCTION OF LEWIS PROTHERO AND  
THE KILLING OF BISHOP LILLIMAN.

BOTH OF THEM HAD  
BEEN EMPLOYED AT  
LARKHILL RESETTLEMENT  
CAMP DURING 1992 AND '93.  
SO HAD DR. SURRIDGE.  
WE TRIED TO WARN HER.

WE WERE  
TOO LATE.



AFTERWARDS, HOWEVER,  
WE DID FIND THE DOCTOR'S  
DIARY. IT'S A FIVE-YEAR DIARY  
AND IT DEALS PARTICULARLY  
WITH HER TIME AT LARK-  
HILL. SINCE THIS MORNING  
I'VE READ IT SEVEN  
TIMES.

... AND  
I STILL DON'T  
KNOW WHO  
CODENAME "V" IS.



... BUT I THINK  
I KNOW WHAT  
HE IS.



I'VE TAKEN KEY EXCERPTS FROM THE DIARY, BALANCED THEM AGAINST MY OWN FINDINGS AND PLACED THEM IN ORDER. THE STORY THAT EMERGES IS, FRANKLY, INCREDIBLE...



IT BEGINS ON APRIL 30TH, 1993. I'LL READ IT TO YOU.

"I ARRIVED AT LARKHILL THIS MORNING. MY DRIVER WAS A MAN NAMED GOSLING. HE DIDN'T SAY A WORD TO ME ALL THE WAY FROM ANDOVER."



"GOD, THIS PLACE IS MISERABLE."

"I MET COMMANDER PROTHERO, WHO I'M AFRAID I FIND RATHER VULGAR AND UNPLEASANT. HE PROMISED TO SHOW ME MY RESEARCH STOCK ONCE I'D SETTLED IN, AND DID SO THIS AFTERNOON."



"THEY'RE A POOR BUNCH. PROTHERO TELLS ME THAT THEIR HABITS ARE FILTHY. NONE OF THEM WILL BE ANY USE TO ME IF I DON'T GET TO WORK ON THEM SOON."

"MAY 17TH: ALMOST FINISHED THE FINAL DRAFT OF THE SCHEDULES FOR MY PROJECT. VERY EXCITED ABOUT IT SO FAR."

"HORMONE RESEARCH IS ALMOST USELESS WHEN RATS OR RABBITS ARE USED, AND THIS IS A HEAVEN-SENT OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN SOMETHING POSITIVE. I START NEXT WEEK. ALL BEING WELL."



"MAY 23RD: PROTHERO HAS PICKED THE SUBJECTS... FOUR DOZEN OF THEM. AND I'VE GOT TO INSPECT THEM THIS AFTERNOON. THEY'RE SO WEAK AND PATHETIC YOU FIND YOURSELF HATING THEM."



"THEY DON'T FIGHT OR STRUGGLE AGAINST DEATH. THEY JUST STARE AT YOU WITH WEAK EYES. THEY MAKE ME WANT TO BE SICK, PHYSICALLY. THEY'RE HARDLY HUMAN."

"JUNE 5TH: WELL, WE DID IT. ALL FOUR DOZEN OF THEM. GOT A SHOT OF BATCH 5, WHICH IS THE PITURAZIN/PINEARIN MIXTURE. IT'S TOO EARLY FOR ANY RESULTS YET, REALLY."



"THAT CREEPY PADRE, TONY LULLIMAN, INSISTED ON BEING THERE WHILE IT WAS DONE TO LEND SPIRITUAL SUPPORT. HE RUBS HIS HANDS TOGETHER AND STARES AT MY CHEST. I HATE HIM."

"JUNE THE NINTH."

"OF THE ORIGINAL FOUR DOZEN, OVER SEVENTY-FIVE PERCENT ARE DEAD NOW."

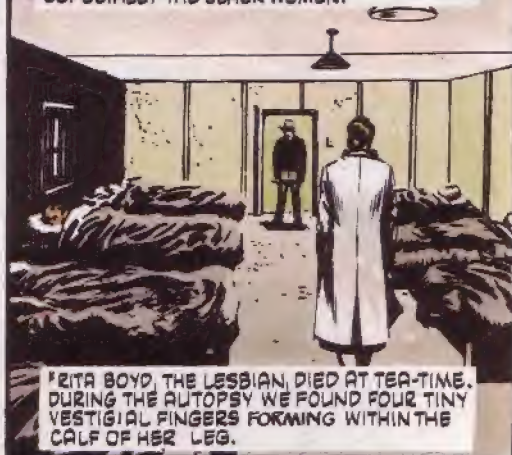


"OUT OF THE TEN THAT ARE LEFT, I DOUBT THAT THREE WILL SURVIVE THE NIGHT. ONE OF THE BLACKS, DONALD CRANE, IS IN PARTICULARLY BAD CONDITION."



"HE IS DELIRIOUS ALL THE TIME, AND IMAGINES HE IS IN TRENCHTOWN, JAMAICA. HE HAS STARTED TO DEVELOP FOUR EXTRA NIPPLES, AND HIS GENERATIVE ORGANS HAVE ATROPHIED."

"STRANGELY, THERE ARE NO CLEAR PATTERNS EMERGING AS TO WHICH GROUP SUCCEDES QUICKEST. IF ANYTHING, THE WOMEN ARE SLIGHTLY MORE RESISTANT THAN THE MEN, ESPECIALLY THE BLACK WOMEN."



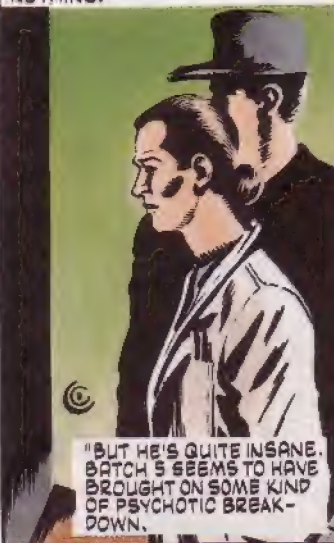
"RITA BOYD, THE LESBIAN, DIED AT TEA-TIME. DURING THE AUTOPSY WE FOUND FOUR TINY VESTIGIAL FINGERS FORMING WITHIN THE CALF OF HER LEG."



"JUNE 18TH: ONLY FIVE LEFT NOW. TWO MEN AND THREE WOMEN, WHICH TENDS TO CONTRADICT MY ENTRY OF THE 9TH OF JUNE. WE'VE HOUSED THEM IN INDIVIDUAL CUBICLES AT THE MEDICAL BLOCK.



"PHYSICALLY, THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ANYTHING WRONG WITH HIM. NO CELLULAR ANOMALIES, NOTHING.



"STRANGELY, HE'S DEVELOPED ONE OF THOSE CURIOUS SIDE EFFECTS WHICH SEEM TO AFFLICT CERTAIN CATEGORIES OF SCHIZOPHRENIC:



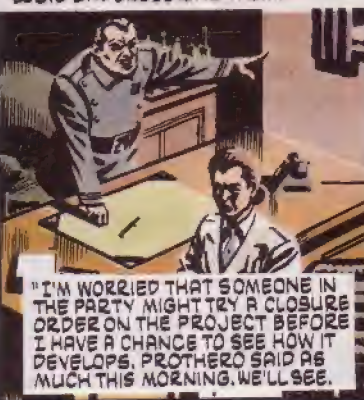
"THE MAN IN ROOM 5 IS A REALLY FASCINATING CASE.

"HE LOOKED AT ME TODAY AS IF I WERE SOME SORT OF INSECT. HE LOOKED AT ME AS IF HE FELT SORRY FOR ME.



"HIS FACE IS VERY UGLY. I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT IT ALL EVENING.

"I THINK HIS BEHAVIOR PATTERNS ARE WHAT INTEREST ME. THEY'RE UTTERLY IRRATIONAL, BUT THEY SEEM TO HAVE A CERTAIN DERANGED LOGIC UNDERSCORING THEM.



"I'M WORRIED THAT SOMEONE IN THE PARTY MIGHT TRY A CLOSURE ORDER ON THE PROJECT BEFORE I HAVE A CHANCE TO SEE HOW IT DEVELOPS. PROTHERO SAID AS MUCH THIS MORNING. WE'LL SEE.

"JULY 12TH: PATEL, THE ASIAN IN CUBICLE THREE, DIED TODAY. HIS LIVER HAD CERVED FUNCTIONING. HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO OPEN HIM UP AND FIND OUT WHY.



"I'VE BEEN SPENDING A LOT OF TIME STUDYING ROOM 5 AGAIN, I'M AFRAID.

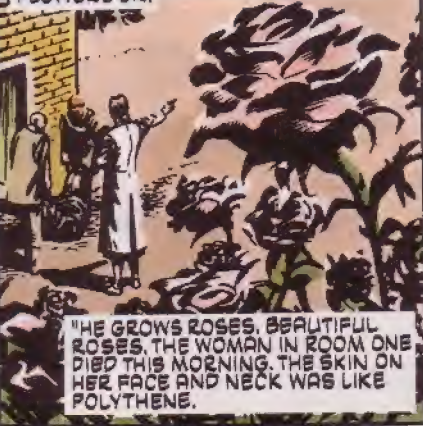
"I'M GLAD WE LET HIM HAVE A GO AT THE GARDENING PROJECT. PROTHERO WAS RELUCTANT AT FIRST. I SUPPOSE IT'S BECAUSE WITH THE FOOD SHORTAGE, THESE PLACES HAVE TO BE SELF-SUPPORTING.



"HE'S DELIGHTED NOW. THE FAT TOAD, ROOM FIVE'S TURNED OUT TO BE A GENIUS AT GARDENING.

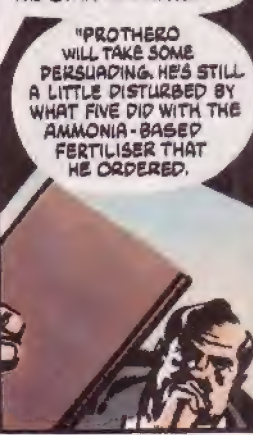
"HE'S SORTED OUT THE WHITEFLY AND IT LOOKS LIKE BEING A GOOD YIELD.

"AUG 7TH: THE CROP PRODUCTION HAS ALMOST DOUBLED. PROTHERO'S LETTING ROOM FIVE ORDER SOME GARDEN SUPPLIES AND HE'S EVEN GIVEN HIM A PATCH TO GROW FLOWERS ON.



"HE GROWS ROSES. BEAUTIFUL ROSES. THE WOMAN IN ROOM ONE DIED THIS MORNING. THE SKIN ON HER FACE AND NECK WAS LIKE POLYTHENE.

"SEPTEMBER 16TH. GARDEN DOESN'T REQUIRE MUCH WORK THIS TIME OF YEAR. ROOM FIVE WANTS TO HELP WITH THE DECORATING IN THE STAFF QUARTERS.



"PROTHERO WILL TAKE SOME PERSUADING. HE'S STILL A LITTLE DISTURBED BY WHAT FIVE DID WITH THE AMMONIA-BASED FERTILISER THAT HE ORDERED.



"IT'S ARRANGED IN PILES AROUND HIS CELL. IT MAKES A KIND OF GEOMETRIC SHAPE. HE SITS MOTIONLESS FOR HOURS IN THE CENTRE OF IT. THE AMMONIA STENCH IS TERRIBLE.



"SEPTEMBER 29TH: PROTHERO ON MY BACK ABOUT FIVE'S GREASE SOLVENT. HE ORDERS FOURTEEN GALLONS OF IT AND THEN SWIPES HALF TO DECORATE HIS CELL. PROTHERO PICKS HIS NOSE.



"THE PATTERNS OF SOLVENT AND FERTILISER ON THE FLOOR OF FIVE'S CUBICLE ARE BECOMING SO INTRICATE. I'VE GOT TO FOLLOW THIS OBSESSION TO THE END. IT MIGHT BE A NEW SYNDROME.

"NOV. 5TH: HIS CUBICLE IS COVERED WITH SO MUCH JUNK. THE AMMONIA SMELLS TERRIBLE AND THERE IS A SORT OF SWIMMING POOL SMELL TOO. LORD KNOWS WHERE THAT COMES FROM.



"I'M SURE THAT IN HIS MIND ALL THIS MAKES PERFECT SENSE. I'M SURE OF IT."

THE NEXT ENTRY I WANT TO READ WAS MADE ON DECEMBER 24TH, 1993, AND IT REFERS TO THE EVENTS OF THE PREVIOUS DAY.

IT STARTS WITH THE WORDS "HE LOOKED AT," WHICH ARE CROSSED OUT. THEN IT SAYS "NO, CAN'T WRITE ABOUT IT YET, CAN'T HOLD," AND THEN ANOTHER GAP.

WHEN IT RESUMES, IT'S IN A DIFFERENT COLORED INK...



"I WAS IN THE MESS. IT WAS ABOUT HALF PAST TEN WHEN WE HEARD THE FIRST EXPLOSION.



"WE RAN TO THE DOOR TO SEE. LUCKILY, I WAS RIGHT AT THE BACK.

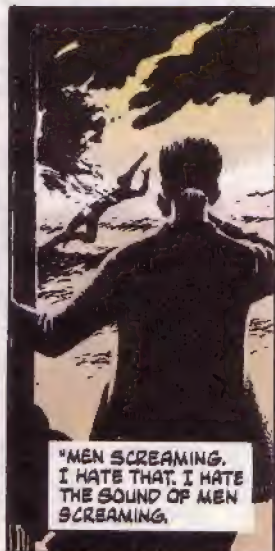
"THE ONES AT THE FRONT RAN STRAIGHT INTO THE GAS. IT WAS HORRIBLE.



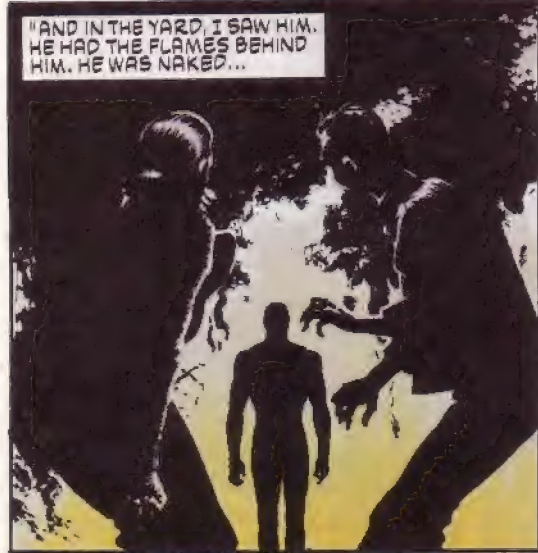
"A FEW OF US WENT OUT THROUGH THE REAR DOOR TO AVOID THE GAS. YOU COULD HEAR PEOPLE SCREAMING EVERYWHERE.



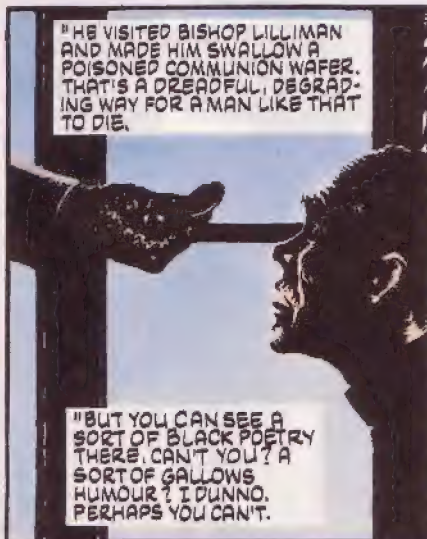
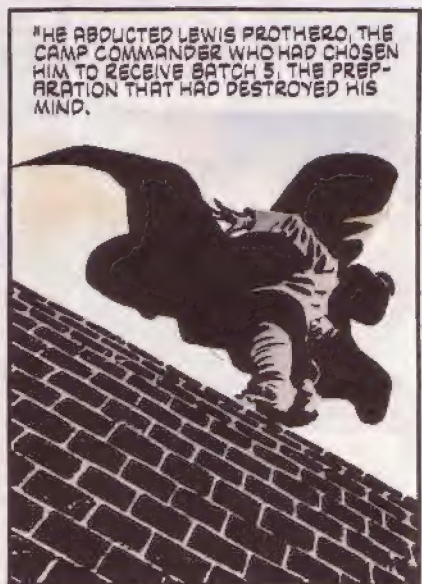
"MEN SCREAMING. I HATE THAT. I HATE THE SOUND OF MEN SCREAMING.











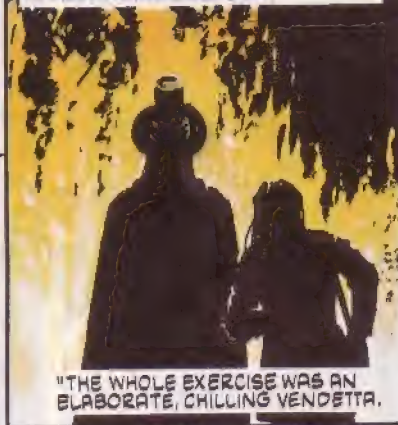


"HER, AND EVERYBODY ELSE WHO WORKED AT LARKHILL. HER AND EVERYBODY ELSE WHO COULD HAVE IDENTIFIED HIM."



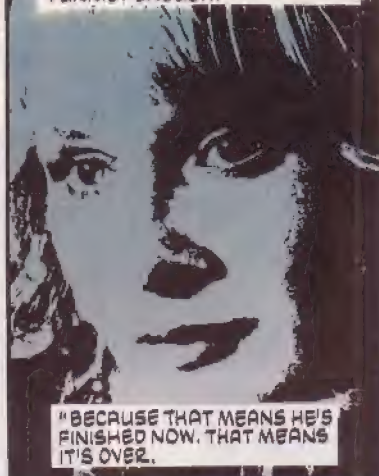
"YOU SEE, THERE ARE TWO POSSIBLE MOTIVES HERE. NOT ONE."

"THE FIRST MOTIVE IS REVENGE. HE ESCAPES FROM LARKHILL AND VOWS TO GET EVEN WITH HIS TORMENTORS. THE PARLIAMENT BOMBING AND THE OTHER STUFF IS JUST A SMOKESCREEN."



"THE WHOLE EXERCISE WAS AN ELABORATE, CHILLING VENDETTA."

"THAT'S THE EXPLANATION THAT I FIND MOST REASSURING, FUNNILY ENOUGH."



"BECAUSE THAT MEANS HE'S FINISHED NOW. THAT MEANS IT'S OVER."

"THE SECOND MOTIVE IS MORE SINISTER. LIKE I SAID, EVERYONE WHO COULD HAVE IDENTIFIED HIM IS NOW DEAD."



"WHAT IF HE'S JUST BEEN CLEARING THE GROUND?"

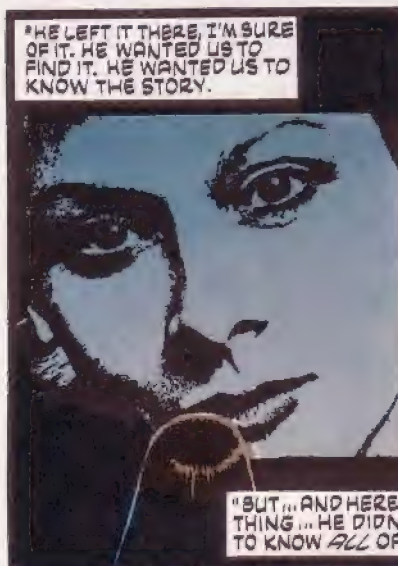
"WHAT IF HE'S PLANNING SOMETHING ELSE?"



"YOU SEE, THIS DIARY THAT WE FOUND... IT WAS IN FULL VIEW ON THE DOCTOR'S WRITING BUREAU. WE DIDN'T HAVE TO SEARCH FOR IT."



"HE LEFT IT THERE, I'M SURE OF IT. HE WANTED US TO FIND IT. HE WANTED US TO KNOW THE STORY."

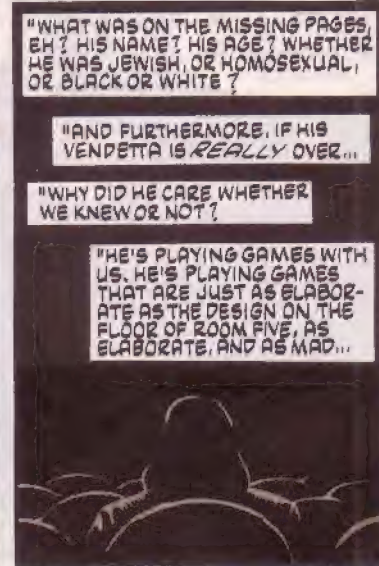


"BUT... AND HERE'S A FUNNY THING... HE DIDN'T WANT US TO KNOW ALL OF IT."

"WHEN WE FOUND THE DIARY, SOME OF THE PAGES HAD BEEN TORN OUT. IT WASN'T DR. SURRIDGE WHO DID THAT."



"WHAT WAS ON THE MISSING PAGES, EH? HIS NAME? HIS AGE? WHETHER HE WAS JEWISH, OR HOMOSEXUAL, OR BLACK OR WHITE?"



"AND FURTHERMORE, IF HIS VENDETTA IS *REALLY* OVER..."

"WHY DID HE CARE WHETHER WE KNEW OR NOT?"

"HE'S PLAYING GAMES WITH US. HE'S PLAYING GAMES THAT ARE JUST AS ELABORATE AS THE DESIGN ON THE FLOOR OF ROOM FIVE, AS ELABORATE, AND AS MAD..."





"... AND AS DEADLY."



YOU SEE, YOU DEAL WITH SOMETHING LIKE THIS... A SCHEME THAT'S AS INGENUOUS AS IT IS IRRATIONAL AND IT'S LIKE WALKING ON QUICK-SAND. YOU GET SLOWLY SUCKED INTO IT...

I MEAN, FATE DOESN'T HAVE ANY RECORDS OF WHAT HAPPENED AT LARKHILL. WE DIDN'T KEEP RECORDS OF WHAT WENT ON AT ANY OF THE CAMPS. I SUPPOSE WE WERE BEING CAUTIOUS.



BUT LOOK... FOR ALL WE KNOW, THIS DIARY COULD BE A COMPLETE AND UTTER FAKE. CODENAME "V" COULD HAVE WRITTEN IT HIMSELF.

HE MIGHT NEVER HAVE BEEN AT LARKHILL AT ALL. DO YOU SEE? IT COULD ALL BE ANOTHER SMOKE-SCREEN, A FALSE TRAIL, ANOTHER COVER STORY...



MR. FINCH, CAN YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE THAT ANY-ONE WOULD KILL OVER FIFTY PEOPLE FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN TO PROVIDE HIMSELF WITH A COVER STORY?

THE VERY IDEA IS...



... MADNESS.



AH YES.

I SEE...



VERY WELL, I THINK THAT WILL BE ALL, MR. FINCH. ENGLAND PREVAILS.



OH, AND MR. FINCH?

LEADER?



HAPPY CHRISTMAS.







THIS VICIOUS CABARET



THEY SAY THAT THERE'S  
A BROKEN LIGHT FOR  
EVERY HEART ON  
BROADWAY

THEY  
SAY THAT LIFE'S  
A GAME AND THEN  
THEY TAKE THE  
BOARD AWAY

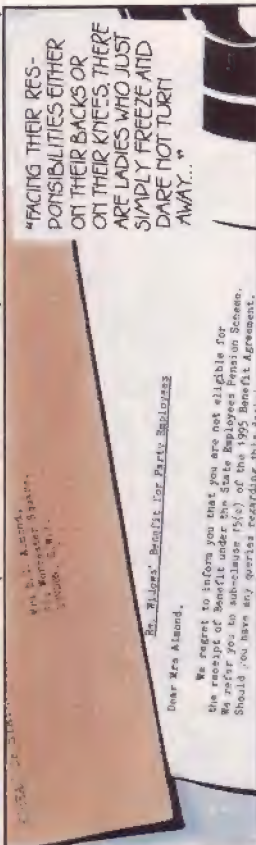
THEY  
GIVE YOU MASKS  
AND COSTUMES  
AND AN OUTLINE  
OF THE STORY.



Musical notation for the first system, featuring a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written on a single staff.



Musical notation for the second system, featuring a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written on a single staff.



Musical notation for the third system, featuring a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written on a single staff.



And the widows who refuse to cry will be dressed in garter and bow-tie and be taught to kick their legs up high in this vicious cabaret."

"At last the 1998 show! The ballet on the burning stage! The documentary seen upon the fractured screen!"

There's a police-man with an honest soul that has seen whose head is on the pole and he grunts and fills his briar bowl with a feeling of unease."

The dreadful poem scrawled upon the crumpled page!

Then he briskly frisks the torn remains for a fingerprint or crime-stains and endeavours to ignore the chains that he walks in to his knees."

While his master in the dark nearby inspects the hands with brutal eye that have never brushed a lover's thigh but have squeezed a nation's throat."

And the police-man with an honest soul who's higher still in the night...





to if... were the children  
dreams in his secret  
in his secret  
dreams for the  
harsh embrace  
of cruel machines  
but his lover is  
not what she  
seems and she will  
not leave a  
note

is the dark stair by in...  
mutter  
while his  
winks in to his  
loves


speaks the words with  
breath  
eye  
that have  
never  
breathed a  
lover's  
high but here

"AT LAST THE 1998  
SHOW! THE SITUATION  
TRAGEDY! GRAND  
OPERA SLICK WITH  
SOAPI! CLIFF-HANGERS  
WITH NO HOPE!"



separated I could feel  
full of  
huggers is too  
accept  
dreams for the  
hark on faces of  
cruel machines  
but he  
loves a  
not what she  
seems and she  
will not leave a  
note

"THE WATER COLOUR  
IN THE FLOODED  
GALLERY"



will not leave a note  
As  
the  
sister-  
marry-  
right  
about  
The  
of a  
I-  
has  
eng-  
ely!

"THERE'S A GIRL  
WHO'LL PUSH BUT  
WILL NOT SHOVE  
AND SHE'S DESPERATE  
FOR HER FATHER'S  
LOVE. SHE BELIEVES  
THE HAND BENEATH  
THE GLOVE MAY BE  
ONE SHE NEEDS TO  
HOLD."

Good  
speaks  
did  
with  
soul  
Q&A  
The  
water-  
color  
is  
the

"THOUGHT SHE DOUBTS  
HER HOST'S MORALITIES  
SHE DECIDES THAT  
SHE IS MORE AT EASE  
IN THE LAND OF DOING-  
AS-YOU-PLEASE THAN  
OUTSIDE IN THE COLD."



huddled  
gaily-  
y  
There's  
I  
girl  
will  
push  
but  
will  
not  
dove  
and  
she's  
desperate  
for  
her  
father's  
love  
She  
be-





Verse

Times the hand be- with the gun may be one she needs to hold  
Through the shadows her heart's un- re- i- tis too far to go

BUT THE BACKDROPS  
PEEL AND THE SETS  
GIVE WAY AND THE  
CAST GET EATEN BY  
THE PLAY THERE'S  
A MURDERER AT THE  
MATINEE THERE ARE  
DEAD MEN IN  
THE AISLES.

AND THE PATRONS  
AND THE ACTORS TOO  
ARE UNCERTAIN IF  
THE SHOW IS THROUGH  
AND WITH SIDELONG  
LOOKS AWAIT  
THEIR CLUE...

BUT  
THE FROZEN  
MASK JUST  
SMILES.

Verse

backdrops peel and the sets give way and the  
cast get eaten by the play

"AT LAST THE 1938  
SHOW! THE TONG-  
SUNG NO-ONE  
EVER SINGS! THE  
CURFEW CHORUS  
LINE! THE COMEDY  
DIVINE!"

"THE BULGING EYES  
OF PUPPETS,  
STRANGLING BY  
THEIR STRINGS!"

Verse

And the patrons and the actors too are uncertain if the show is through and with  
certain if the show is through and with

THERE'S THRILLS AND  
CHILLS AND GIRLS GALORE,  
THERE'S SING-SONGS  
AND SURPRISES! THERE'S  
SOMETHING HERE  
FOR EVERYONE,  
RESERVE YOUR  
SEAT TODAY!

THERE'S MIS-  
CHIEFS AND  
MALARKIES...

BUT  
NO QUEERS...

Verse

The back song to one even  
The critics chatters like

The holding eyes of puppets  
strangled by their strings!



There's  
 some-thing here for ev-ry-  
 one, re-  
 spon-  
 se, you will be  
 There's  
 one stop and sup-  
 ply  
 There's  
 health and chil-  
 dren and get  
 place  
 There's  
 health and chil-  
 dren and get  
 place  
 There's  
 health and chil-  
 dren and get  
 place

WITHIN THIS  
 BASTARD'S  
 CARNIVAL-

OR  
 YIDS...

OR  
 DARKIES...

**THIS VICIOUS CABARET!**

excuse me and make a few last years of joy in dance with this heart's carnival this town a-m-rit





JANUARY 5TH, 1998. THE  
SHADOW GALLERY...



AS YOU SEE, MY  
HANDS ARE  
QUITE  
EMPTY...



CONCEALING  
NOTHING...



...NOR HAVE I ANY-  
THING UP MY  
SLEEVE.

AND YET, WITH  
THE MEREST FLICK  
OF MY WRIST...



THE RABBIT  
HAS GONE!



OH!

BRING HER  
BACK!



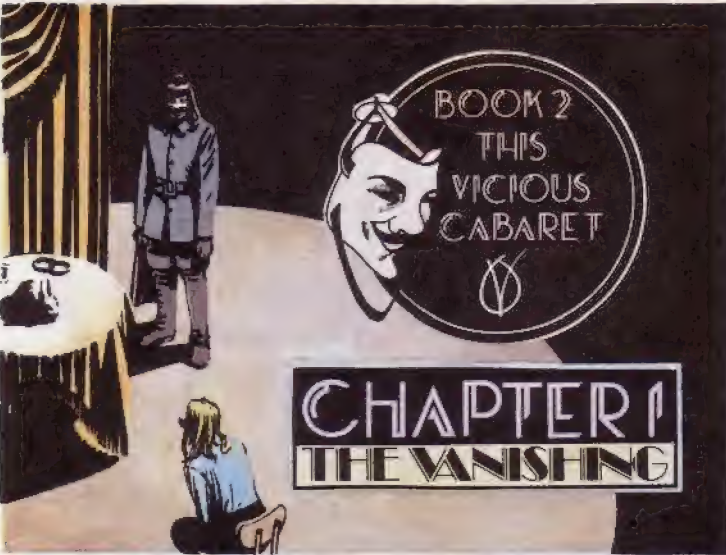
BRING HER BACK?  
BUT WHAT IF SHE IS  
CONTENT WHERE SHE  
IS? DO WE HAVE THE  
RIGHT TO DISTURB  
HER?



AHH... BUT I SEE YOU  
HAVE ALREADY MADE  
UP YOUR MIND VERY  
WELL. WE REPLACE  
THE CLOTH... LIKE SO...  
AND WHEN NEXT  
WE WHISK IT  
AWAY...



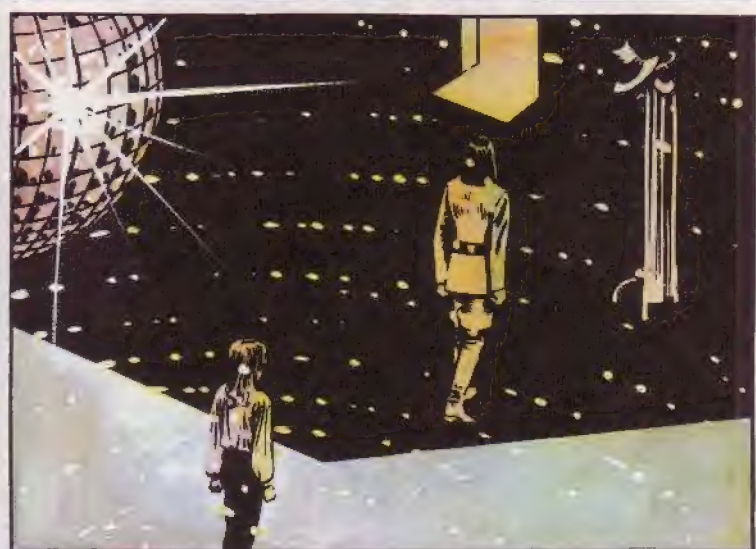












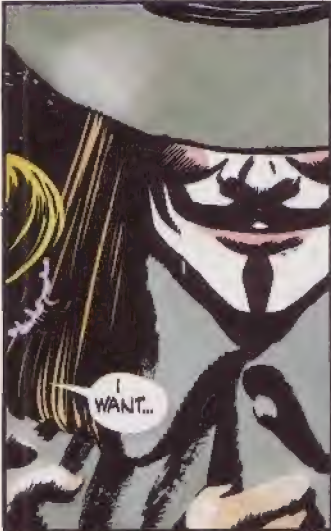
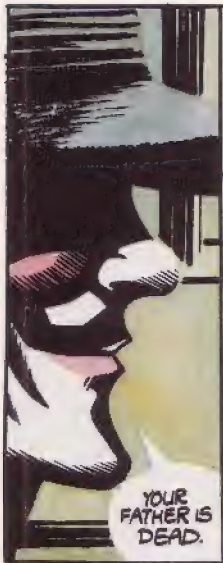
















YOU'VE GONE, DEREK,  
I NEVER LIKED YOU, I  
WAS AFRAID OF YOU,  
I LOVED YOU.

YOU'VE GONE BEYOND THE  
VEIL...



ME TOO.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE VEIL



THEY WERE ALL THERE, AT THE  
FUNERAL. THEY DIDN'T LIKE  
YOU EITHER, DID THEY? I  
NEVER REALISED THAT BEFORE.

HELEN HEYER BARELY SPOKE  
TO ME. SHE LOOKED AFRAID,  
AS IF BEREAVEMENT WAS  
CATCHING.



ROGER DASCOMBE  
WAS THERE. HE  
ASKED HOW I WAS  
COPING WITH THE  
BILLS.

HE WAS VERY FRIENDLY  
TOWARDS ME.



WHEN I LEFT HE SHOOK  
MY HAND AND TOLD  
ME TO RING HIM IF I  
NEEDED ANYTHING.

SMILED, JUST BRIEFLY,  
AS HE SAID IT.



HELD MY HAND TOO  
LONG.

IT WAS AN OFFER, DEREK, AND  
YES, HE MAKES ME SICK, AND  
YES, I HATE HIM...

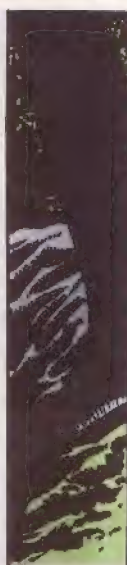
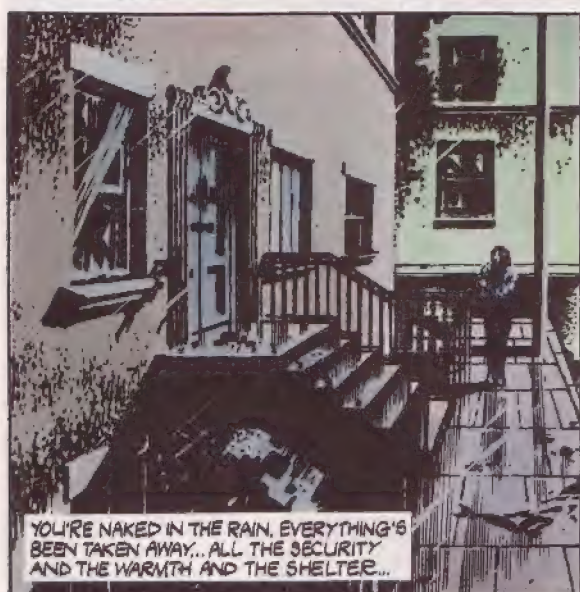


...BUT WHEN YOU'RE A WIDOW, THE  
WORLD LOOKS DIFFERENT. YOU STEP  
THROUGH A CURTAIN AND YOU'RE IN  
A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE TREAT YOU  
DIFFERENTLY. A BLEAK PLACE. YOU'RE  
GONE, DEREK...

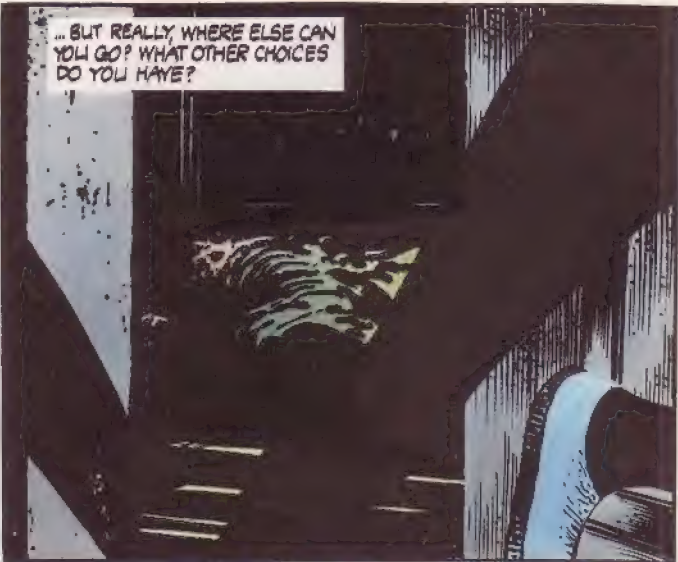


AND I'M ALONE.





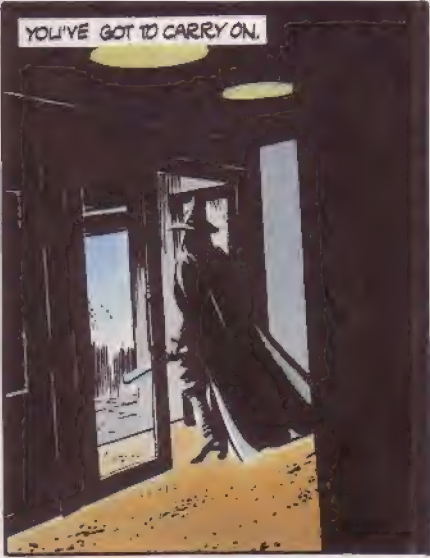




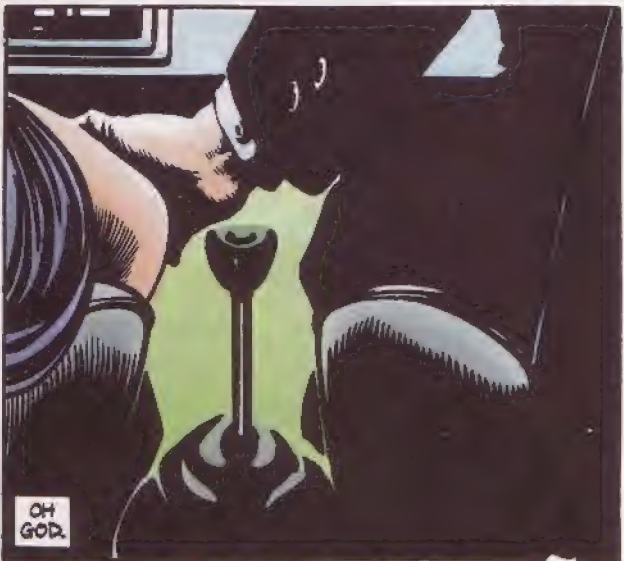








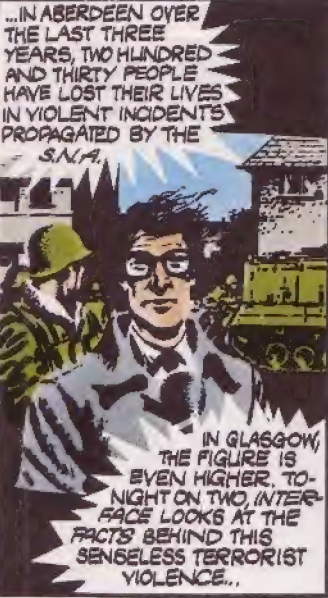
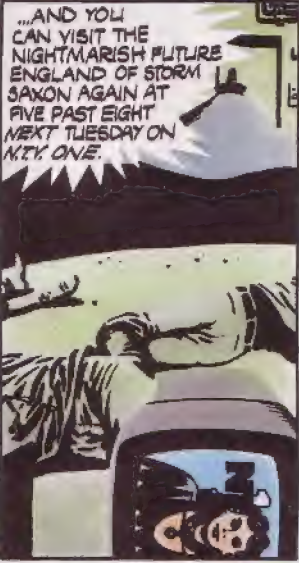




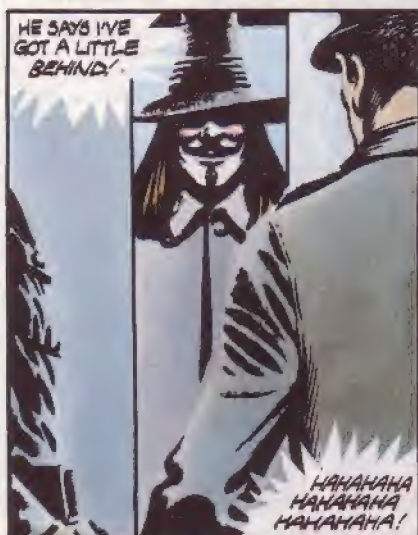
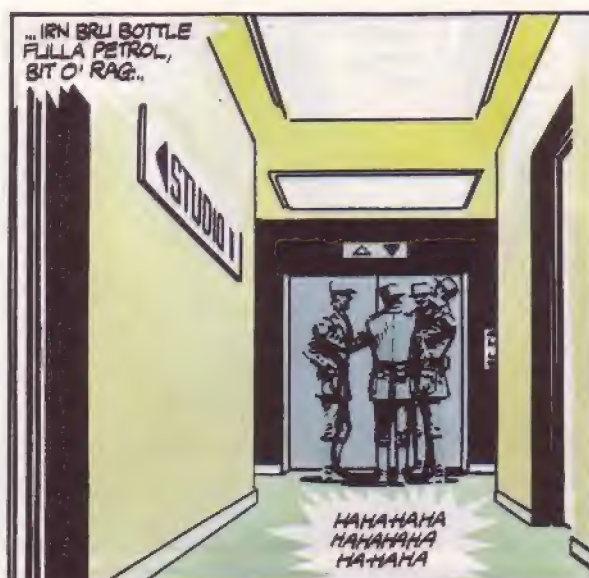




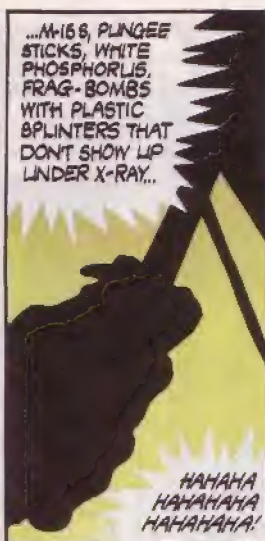








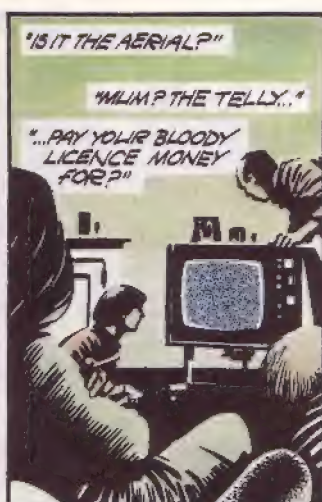
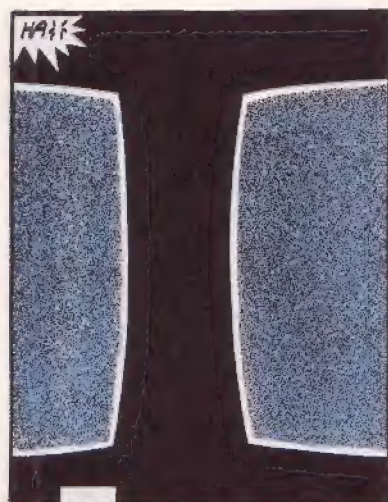






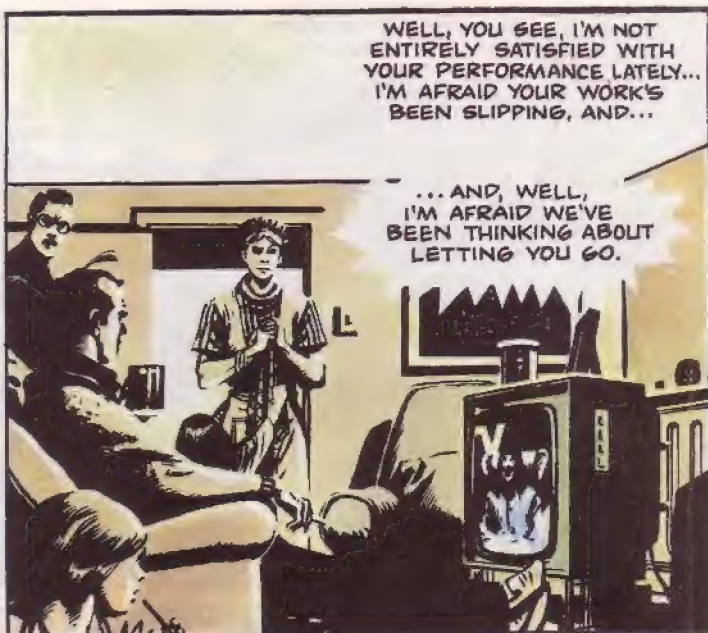




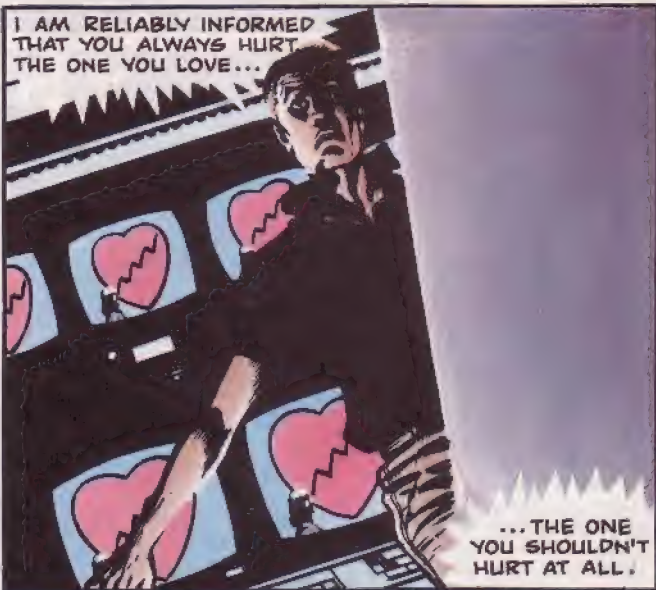
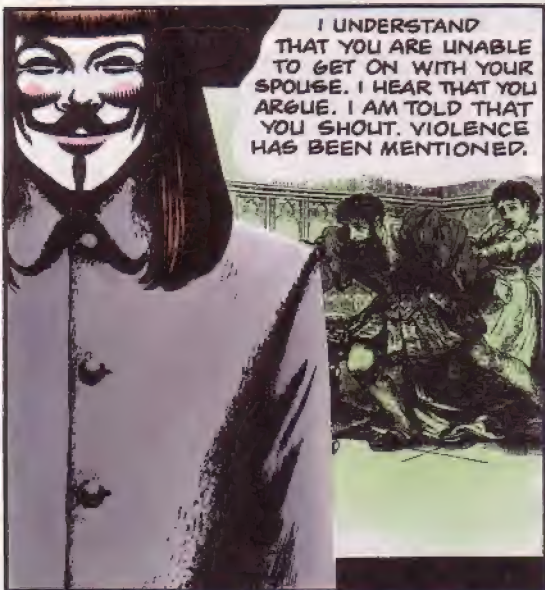




FEBRUARY 23RD, 1998: PEAK TIME.











AND WHAT ABOUT THE CHILDREN? IT'S ALWAYS THE CHILDREN WHO SUFFER, AS YOU'RE WELL AWARE.

POOR LITTLE MITES. WHAT ARE THEY TO MAKE OF IT?



WHAT ARE THEY TO MAKE OF YOUR BULLYING, YOUR DESPAIR, YOUR COWARDICE AND ALL YOUR FONDLY NURTURED BIGOTRIES?



REALLY, IT'S NOT GOOD ENOUGH, IS IT?



AND IT'S NO GOOD BLAMING THE DROP IN WORK STANDARDS UPON BAD MANAGEMENT, EITHER...



..THOUGH, TO BE SURE, THE MANAGEMENT IS VERY BAD.

IN FACT, LET US NOT MINCE WORDS... THE MANAGEMENT IS TERRIBLE!



WE'VE HAD A STRING OF EMBEZZLERS, FRAUDS, LIARS AND LUNATICS MAKING A STRING OF CATASTROPHIC DECISIONS.

THIS IS PLAIN FACT.



BUT WHO ELECTED THEM?





IT WAS YOU! YOU WHO APPOINTED THESE PEOPLE! YOU WHO GAVE THEM THE POWER TO MAKE YOUR DECISIONS FOR YOU!



WHILE I'LL ADMIT THAT ANYONE CAN MAKE A MISTAKE ONCE, TO GO ON MAKING THE SAME LETHAL ERRORS CENTURY AFTER CENTURY SEEMS TO ME NOTHING SHORT OF DELIBERATE.



YOU HAVE ENCOURAGED THESE MALICIOUS INCOMPETENTS, WHO HAVE MADE YOUR WORKING LIFE A SHAMBLES.



YOU HAVE ACCEPTED WITHOUT QUESTION THEIR SENSELESS ORDERS.



YOU HAVE ALLOWED THEM TO FILL YOUR WORKSPACE WITH DANGEROUS AND UNPROVEN MACHINES.

YOU COULD HAVE STOPPED THEM.



ALL YOU HAD TO SAY WAS "NO." YOU HAVE NO SPINE. YOU HAVE NO PRIDE.

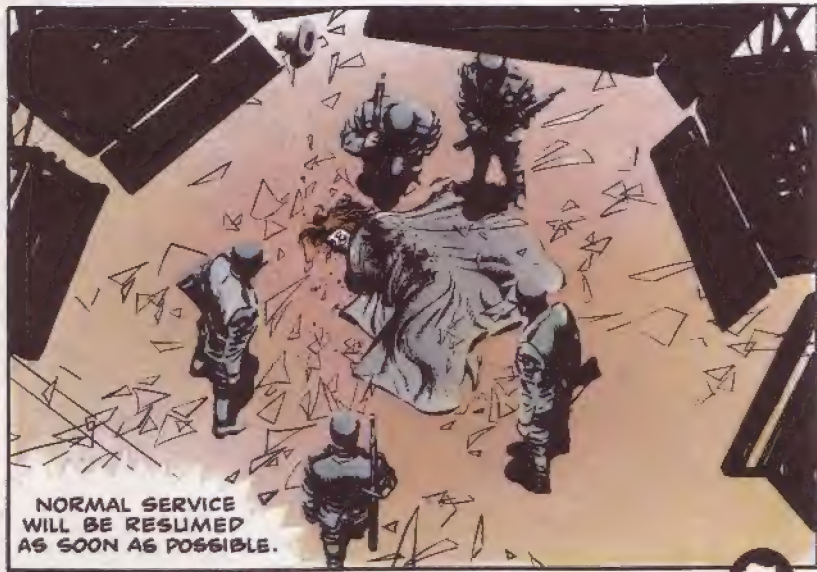


I WILL, HOWEVER, BE GENEROUS.

YOU ARE NO LONGER AN ASSET TO THE COMPANY.

YOU WILL BE GRANTED TWO YEARS TO SHOW ME SOME IMPROVEMENT IN YOUR WORK. IF AT THE END OF THAT TIME YOU ARE STILL UNWILLING TO MAKE A GO OF IT...









WHY THE BLOODY HELL DID I HIT HIM?





YOU HEARD WHAT HE DID? BLOODY INGENIOUS. BREAKS INTO JORDAN TOWER, HOLDS DASCOMBE AND HIS CREW AT DETONATOR POINT AND MAKES 'EM BROADCAST HIS VIDEO.




MADE DASCOMBE SEAL OFF THE BUILDING WITH HIS DESK-CONSOLE.

HE KNEW THE TRANSMITTER WAS INSIDE THE TOWER. MUST'VE. WITH THE BUILDING SEALED OFF, HE KNEW WE COULDN'T GET IN AND PULL THE PLUG ON HIM STRAIGHT AWAY.



BLOODY INGENIOUS.

'COURSE, HE COULDN'T GET OUT, EITHER. HE'D SENT EVERYONE BUT DASCOMBE OUT OF THE CONTROL ROOM JUST BEFORE WE GOT THERE. WHEN MY LADS BURST IN, HE WAS STANDING IN FRONT OF THE OBSERVATION WINDOW.



HE DIDN'T EVEN PUT UP A FIGHT. THEY JUST OPENED UP WITH THE SHOOTERS AND...



WHERE'S DASCOMBE?

SORRY?



DASCOMBE. WHERE IS HE?



WELL, I DUNNO... HE MUST'VE WANDERED OFF SOMEWHERE. IN A DAZE, I EXPECT. HE'D HAD A SHOCK.

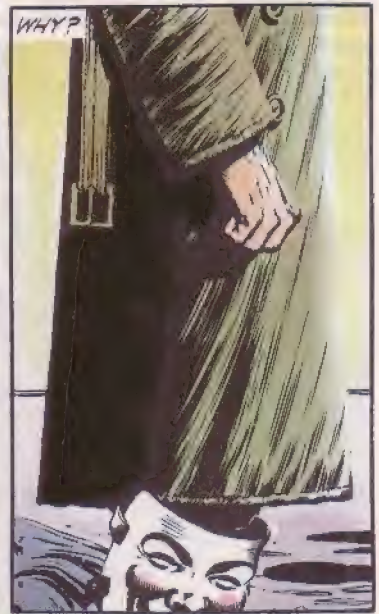
YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN.



HOW LONG AGO DID THIS HAPPEN? I... BUT... TEN MINUTES. TEN OR FIFTEEN MINUTES.









WHY DID I HIT HIM?



THE LEADER WAS GOOD ABOUT IT, REALLY, I EXPECTED A LOT MORE OF A ROLLOCKING THAN I GOT...



AND THEN SENDING ME HERE TO NORFOLK.

SENDING ME ON A HOLIDAY, FOR GOD'S SAKE. I MEAN, THERE'S NOTHING HERE SINCE THE '89 FLOOD, BUT...

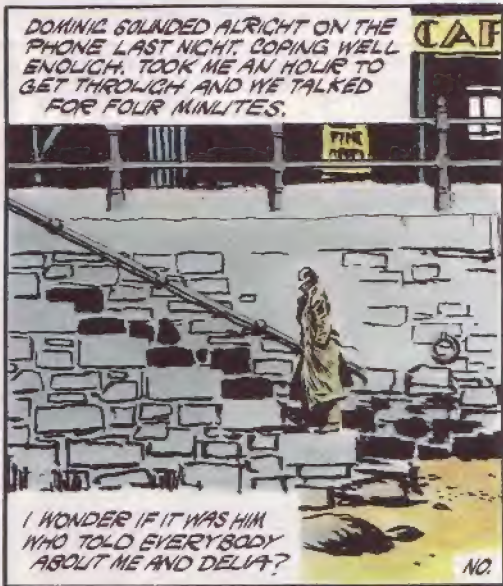


A HOLIDAY, HE MUST BE WORRIED ABOUT ME.

I'M WORRIED ABOUT ME.



DOMINIC SOUNDED ALRIGHT ON THE PHONE LAST NIGHT, COPING WELL ENOUGH. TOOK ME AN HOUR TO GET THROUGH AND WE TALKED FOR FOUR MINUTES.



I WONDER IF IT WAS HIM WHO TOLD EVERYBODY ABOUT ME AND DELIA?

NO.

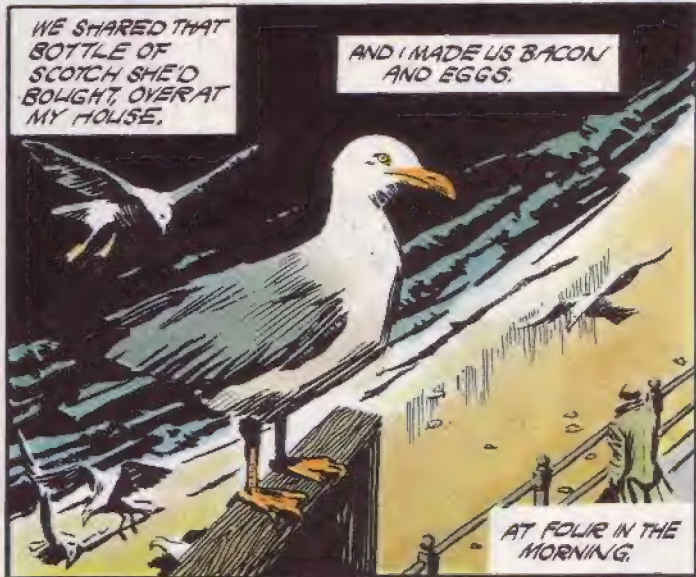
PROBABLY DELIA.

SHE SAID SHE HADN'T, BUT... WELL, SHE NEVER TOLD ME ABOUT WHAT SHE'D DONE AT LARKHILL.



WE ONLY DID IT THREE TIMES, ALL TOLD, ALL THOSE YEARS...

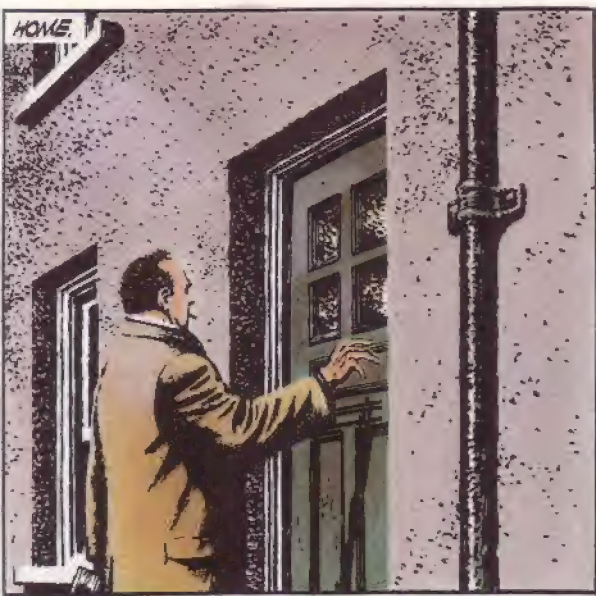
WE SHARED THAT BOTTLE OF SCOTCH SHE'D BOUGHT, OVER AT MY HOUSE.



AND I MADE US BACON AND EGGS.

AT FOUR IN THE MORNING.

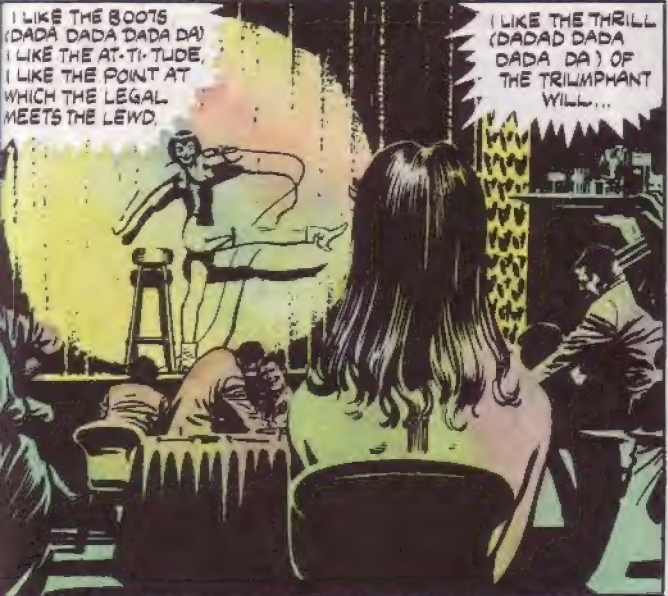








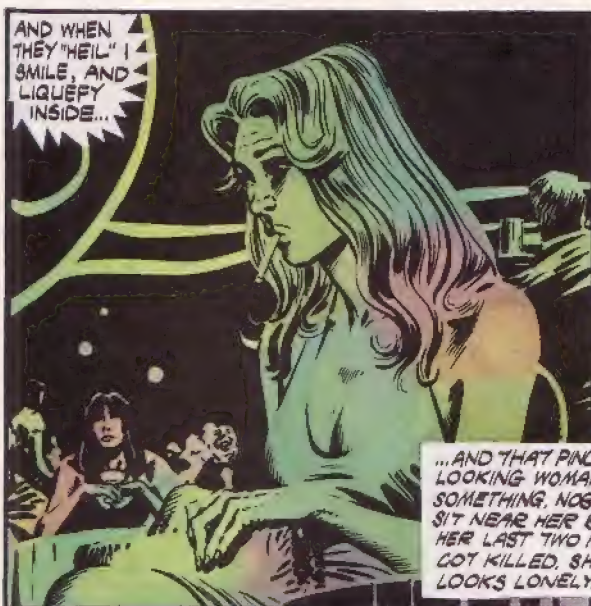




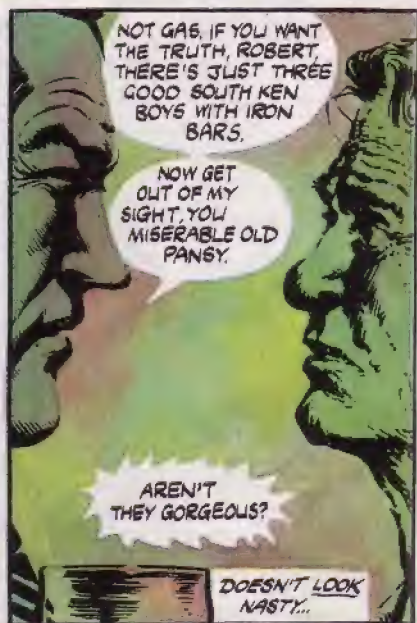
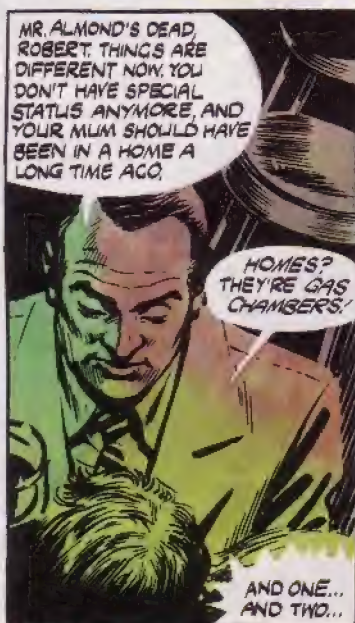
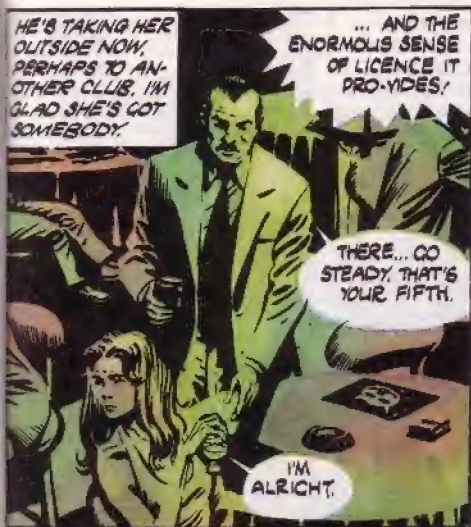




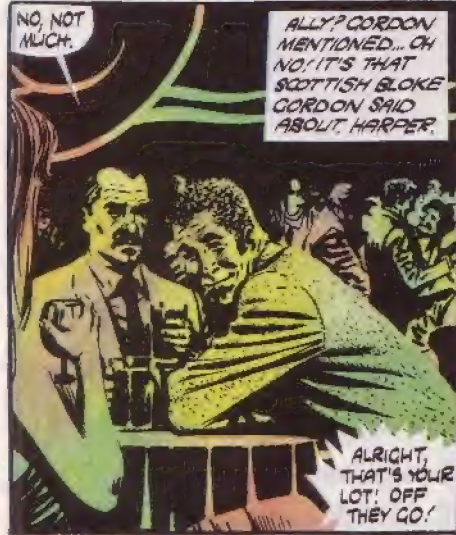
SO IF SOME BLONDE  
AND BLUE-EYED BOY  
WOULD CARE TO TEACH  
ME STRENGTH THROUGH  
JOY...



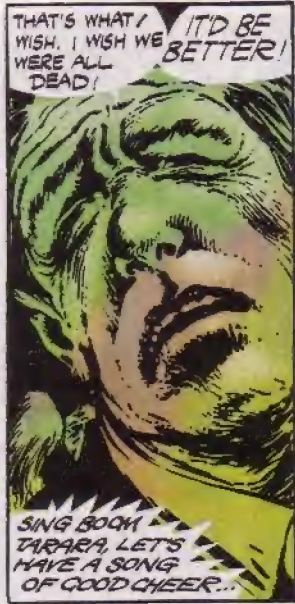


















JUNE 11TH, 1998.



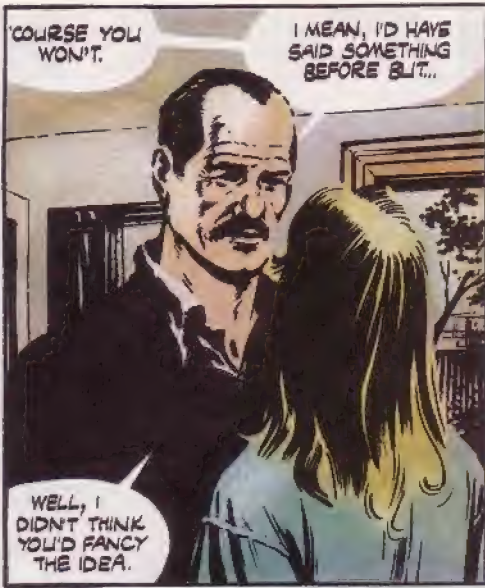
## CHAPTER 7 VISITORS



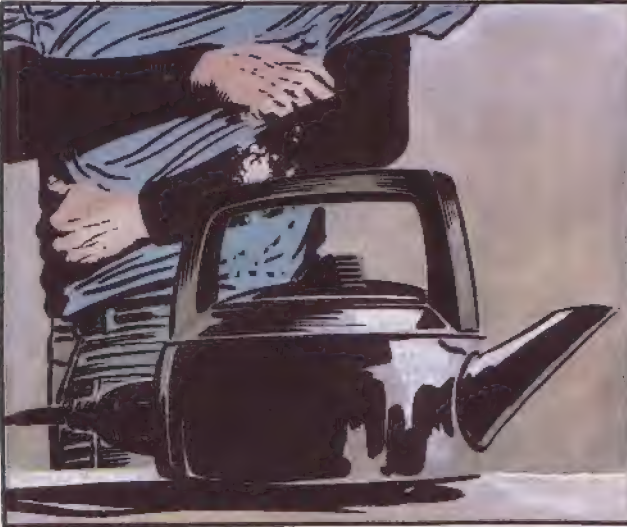
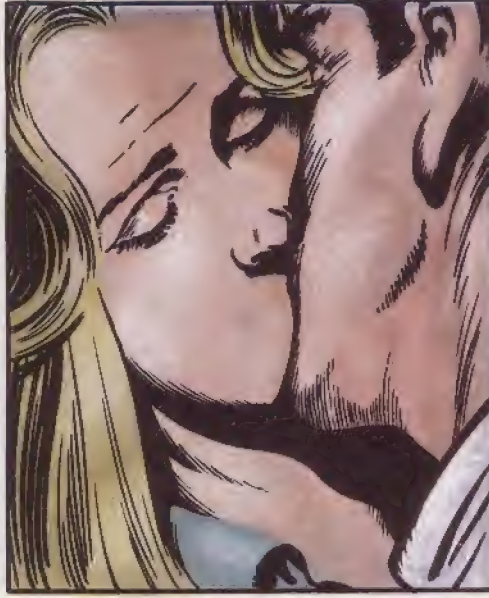












JUNE 11TH, 1998.

EVERY!!



GORDON?  
WHAT'S...?

LOCK  
YOURSELF IN  
THE BATHROOM  
AND DON'T  
MAKE A PEEP.  
VISITORS.

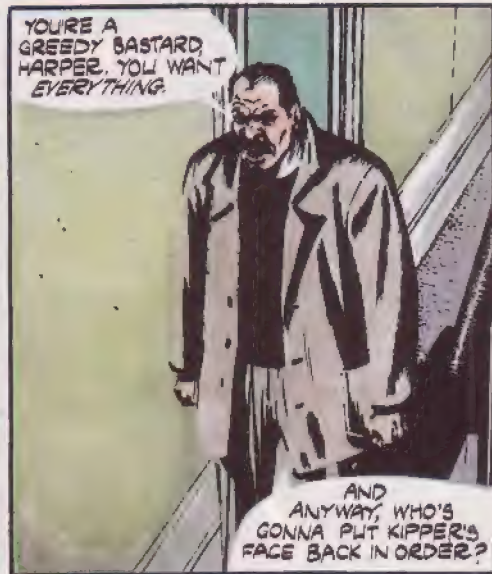


BUT  
WHAT?

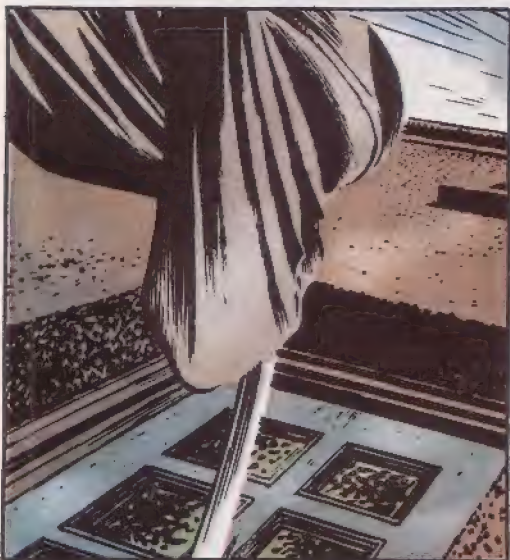
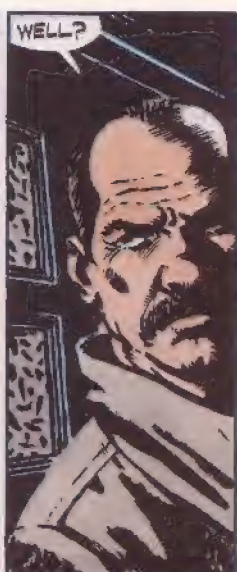
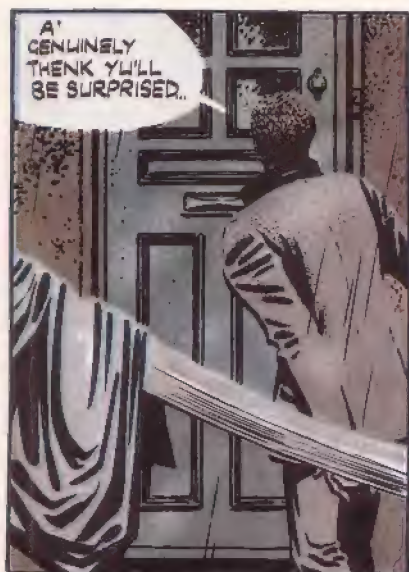


OO  
OV!

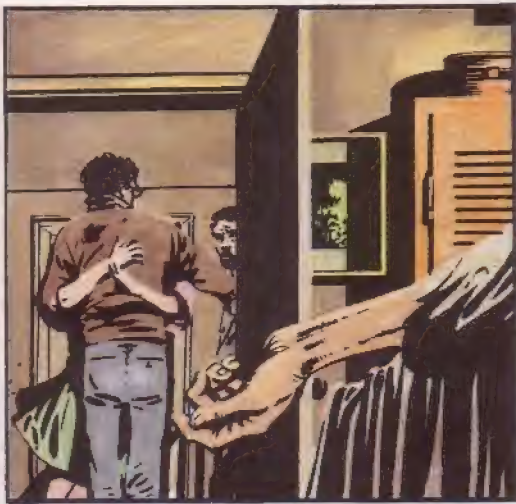




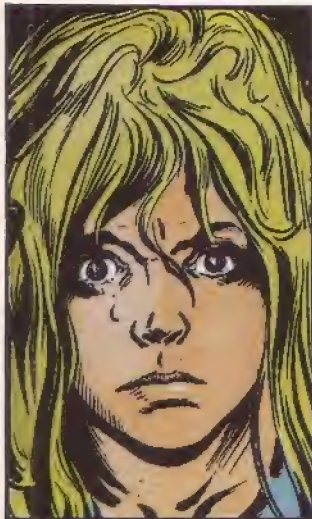








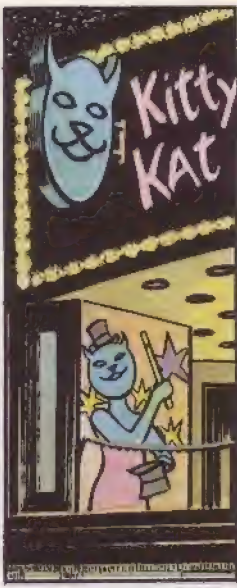








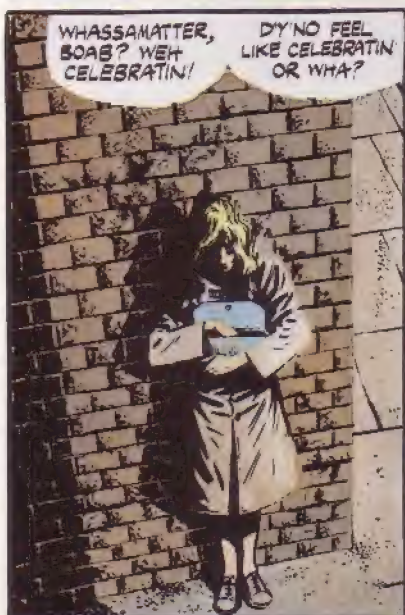
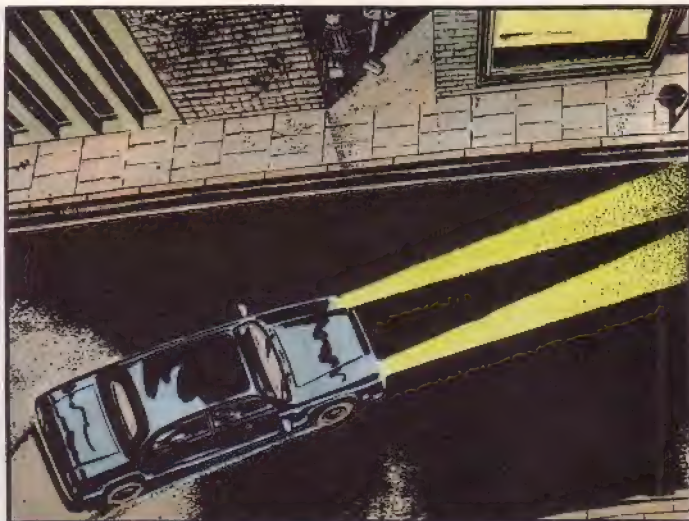
CHAPTER 8  
VENGEANCE











EH, BOAB, Y' GETUM EN, EH?

EH. YIZZA TIGHT BASTUD, YU'RE...

EH, GO AN.

GISSA PINTA HEAVY ANNA BABYCHAM FLUH YISELF. EH?

AY PESSAWF, WIYA?

WHASSAMATTER, BOAB? WEH CELEBRATIN!

DY'NO FEEL LIKE CELEBRATIN OR WHA?

...SO WHOOSA ONE WITHUH BEG TETS? EZZAT CAROLE?

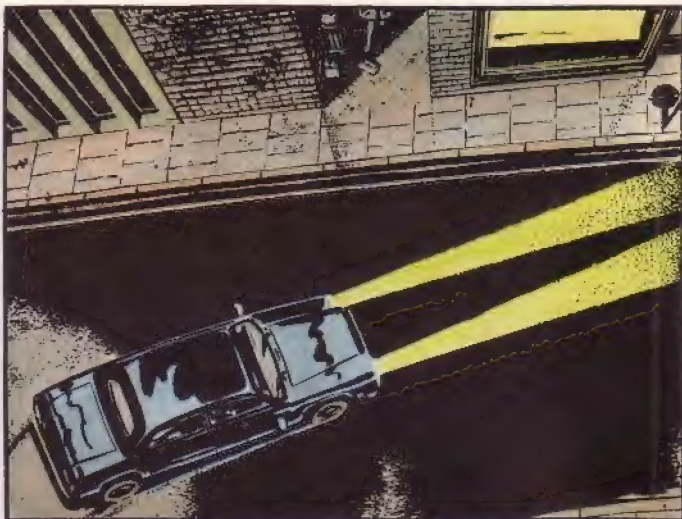
NAY, THAS JEM'S BERD, WHASSANAME, DIYAAN...

SPIKKN FLUH MASEL, AM GETTUN STEAWIN'...

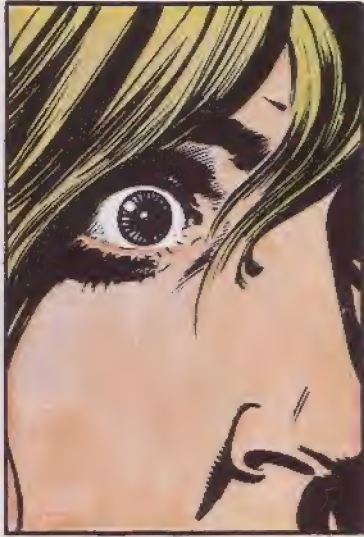














THE AIR AROUND ME IS COMPLETELY  
BLACK. I THINK THAT PERHAPS  
I'M BACKSTAGE AT THE  
THEATRE, DURING THE  
INTERVAL.

THERE ARE MUFFLED  
BLUMPINGS NEARBY.  
STAGE-HANDS ARE  
REARRANGING THE  
SCENERY.

I SMELL ROSES, AND  
THINK ABOUT THE  
SCENTED BIRTHDAY  
CARDS MY MOTHER  
FOUND IN A SHOE  
BOX AT OUR HOUSE  
ON SHOOTER'S HILL.

THE PETALS FALL,  
PENCIL SHAYINGS  
OF CREAM FLESH

EVERYTHING  
CHANGES.

## CHAPTER 9

### VICISSITUDE

IT'S MY BIRTHDAY. I'M STILL  
IN THE THEATRE, BUT I  
KNOW THAT IT'S REALLY  
OUR OLD HOUSE.

I CAN HEAR A PARTY IN  
THE ROOM UPSTAIRS.

VALERIE PAGE  
THE ROSE FOREST

THE BLACK SHADOWS OF THE PAST  
BRED THIS HALF-MAN HALF-DEMON

He looked, acted like  
a man. But the man  
of the wonder-makeup  
passing him failed to  
see. Linger in the mind

"ROD"

WEDD

I KNOW IT'S A BIRTHDAY PARTY, FOR ME, BUT I HAVE A SINKING FEELING THAT IT WILL BE OVER BY THE TIME I GET THERE.

IT'S TAKING ME SO LONG TO GET READY

I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHY I'M  
BOTHERING TO GET DRESSED  
UP LIKE THIS, BUT I FEEL  
AS IF IT'S EXPECTED OF ME

I WISH I DIDN'T HAVE TO.  
I WANT TO GO TO THE  
PARTY NOW.

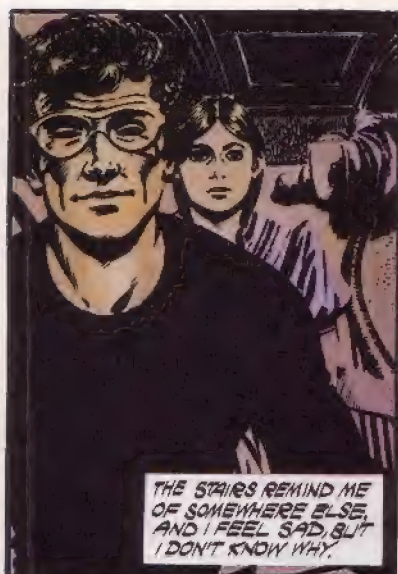
EVERY?

YOU'RE MISSING  
THE PARTY WE'VE  
HIRED A PUNCH AND  
JUDY MAN SPECIALLY..

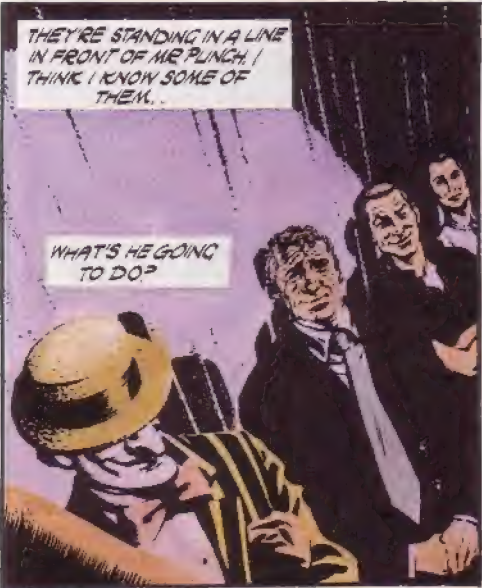
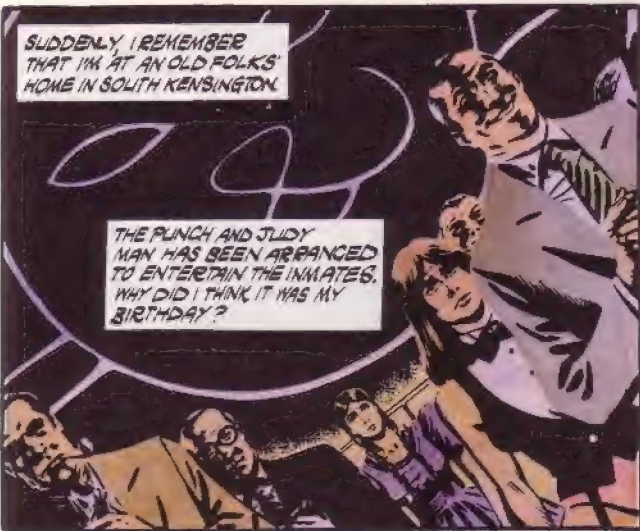
I'M GLAD DAD COULD COME.  
HAVEN'T SEEN HIM MUCH  
SINCE I STARTED WORK AT  
THE MATCH FACTORY

HE LEADS ME UPSTAIRS  
TO THE PARTY, AND I  
WONDER IF THIS IS OUR  
OLD HOUSE AFTER ALL.









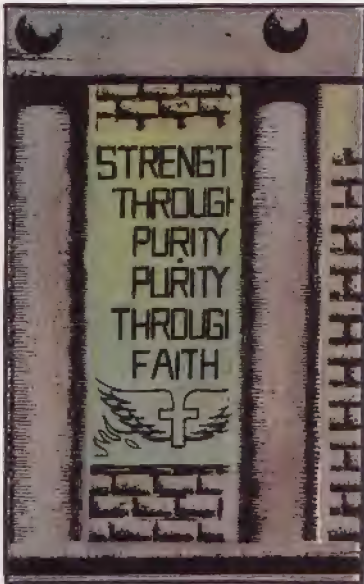
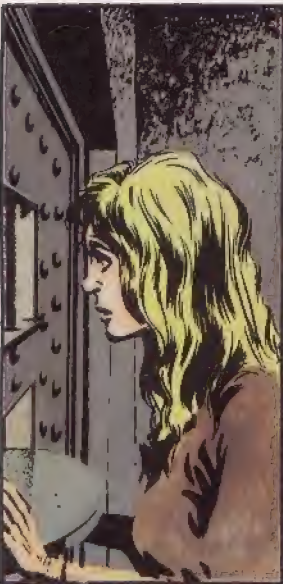




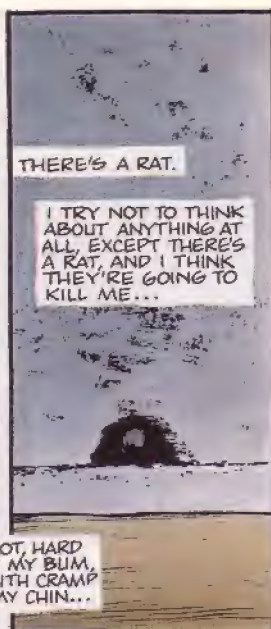












...AND THERE'S A RAT.

## CHAPTER 10 VERMIN

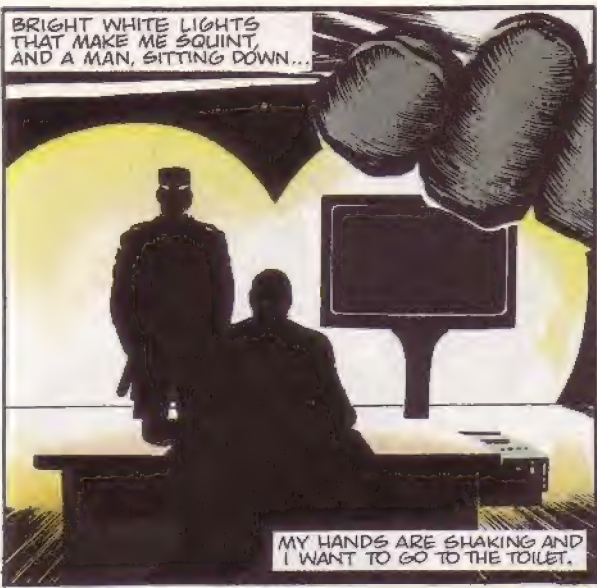








BRIGHT WHITE LIGHTS  
THAT MAKE ME SQUINT,  
AND A MAN, SITTING DOWN...



MY HANDS ARE SHAKING AND  
I WANT TO GO TO THE TOILET.

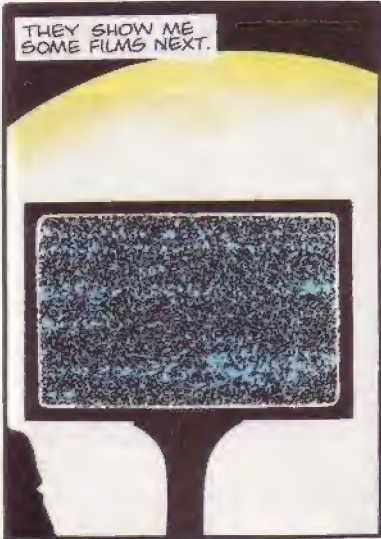
HE ASKS IF I  
KNOW WHY  
I'M HERE.

I SAY NO.



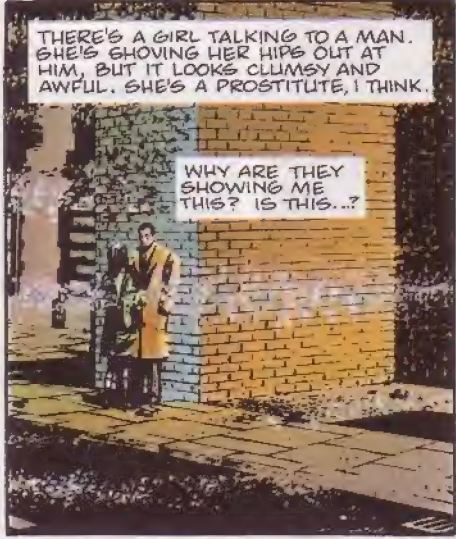
HE CALLS ME A LYING LITTLE  
BASTARD, AND I FEEL LIKE I'VE  
BEEN HIT IN THE STOMACH.

THEY SHOW ME  
SOME FILMS NEXT.



THERE'S A GIRL TALKING TO A MAN.  
SHE'S SHOVING HER HIPS OUT AT  
HIM, BUT IT LOOKS CLUMSY AND  
AWFUL. SHE'S A PROSTITUTE, I THINK.

WHY ARE THEY  
SHOWING ME  
THIS? IS THIS...?



OH.



OH, IT'S ME.



LAST NOVEMBER...  
WESTMINSTER  
BRIDGE, AND...



... THEY WERE GOING TO  
RAPE ME. THEY HAD ME  
UP AGAINST A WALL AND  
THEY WERE GOING TO  
KILL ME, AND THEN...





AND THEN...



OH CHRIST.



THEY KNOW.



THE MAN STARTS TALKING AGAIN, BUT I'M BARELY LISTENING...

WHAT AM I GOING TO SAY? WHAT CAN I TELL THEM?

HE SAYS I WAS FOUND OUTSIDE THE KITTY KAT KELLER BY OFFICERS WATCHING THE CLUB PRIOR TO A RAID.



I WAS CHLOROFORMED TO AVOID AN ALARM.

I HAD A LOADED GUN...

I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT HE WANTS ME TO SAY. WHY DON'T THEY STOP THE FILM? HE HAS A WELSH ACCENT. HE KEEPS TALKING...



...AND THEN HE TELLS ME THAT I'M TO BE FORMALLY CHARGED WITH THE ATTEMPTED MURDER OF SENIOR OFFICER PETER CREEDY A FREQUENT CUSTOMER OF THE KITTY KAT KELLER...

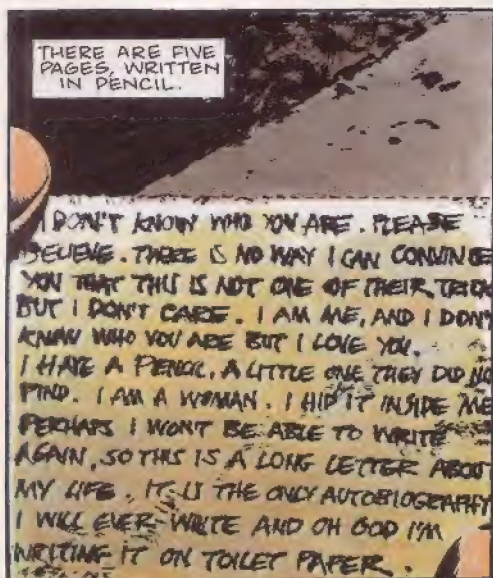


...AND THEN THE MAN BEHIND ME PUTS THE BLINDFOLD BACK ON.





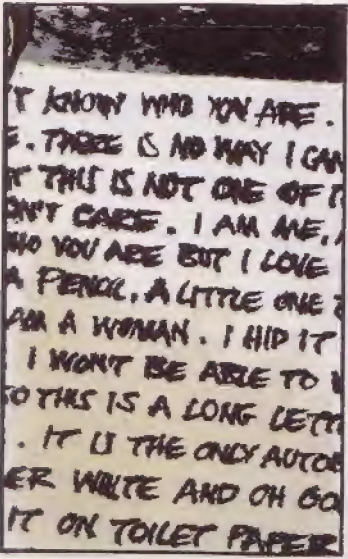












"I KNOW WHO YOU ARE.  
THERE IS NO WAY I CAN  
IF THIS IS NOT ONE OF  
I DON'T CARE. I AM ME,  
WHO YOU ARE BUT I LOVE  
A PENCIL, A LITTLE ONE  
AND A WOMAN. I HID IT  
I WON'T BE ABLE TO  
TO THIS IS A LONG LETTER  
. IT IS THE ONLY AUTO  
ER WRITE AND OH GO  
IT ON TOILET PAPER



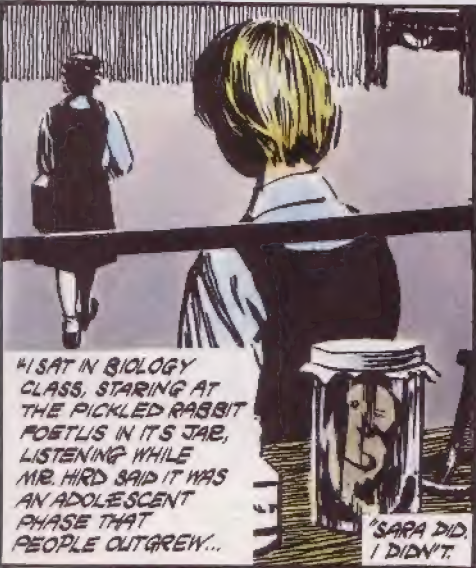
"I WAS BORN IN NOTTINGHAM  
IN 1957, AND IT RAINED A  
LOT. I PASSED MY ELEVEN  
PLUS AND WENT TO GIRL'S  
GRAMMAR. I WANTED TO  
BE AN ACTRESS.

"I MET MY FIRST  
GIRLFRIEND AT  
SCHOOL.



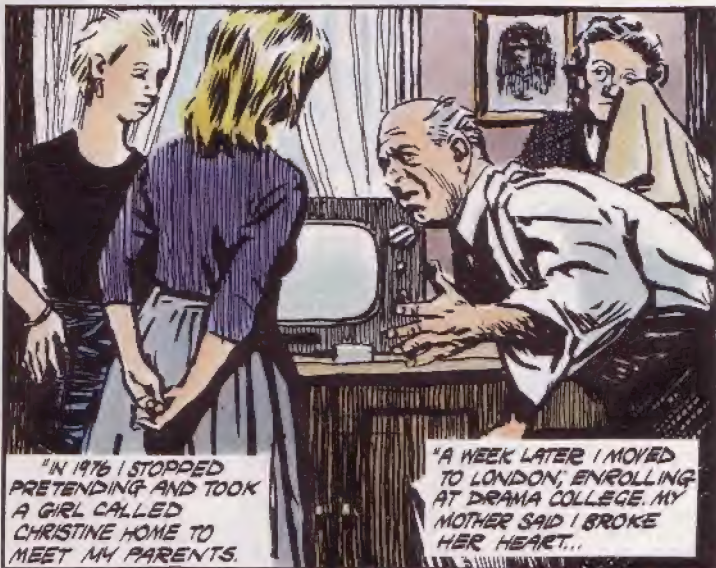
"HER NAME WAS SARA.  
SHE WAS FOURTEEN  
AND I WAS FIFTEEN  
BUT WE WERE BOTH  
IN MISS WATSON'S  
CLASS.

"HER WRISTS. HER  
WRISTS WERE  
BEAUTIFUL.



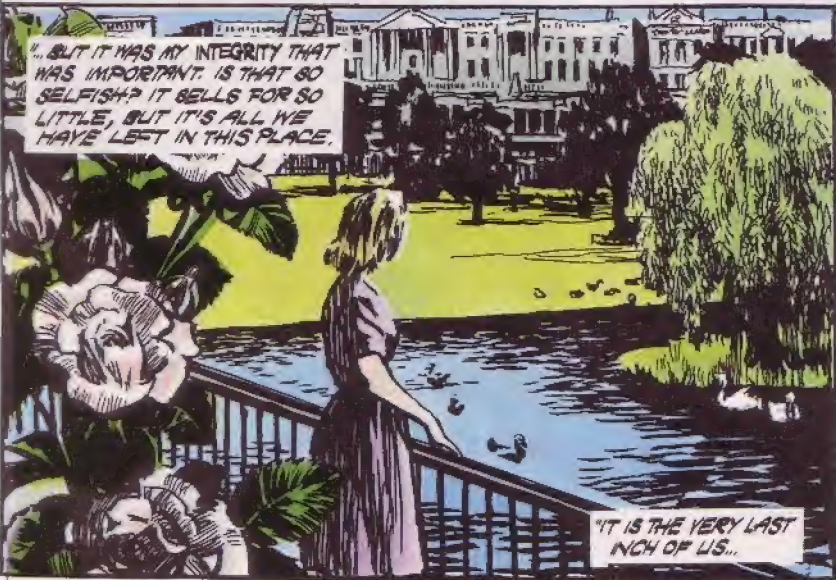
"I SAT IN BIOLOGY  
CLASS, STARING AT  
THE PICKLED RABBIT  
FOETUS IN ITS JAR,  
LISTENING WHILE  
MR. HIRD SAID IT WAS  
AN ADOLESCENT  
PHASE THAT  
PEOPLE OUTGROW...

"SARA DID.  
I DIDN'T.



"IN 1976 I STOPPED  
PRETENDING AND TOOK  
A GIRL CALLED  
CHRISTINE HOME TO  
MEET MY PARENTS.

"A WEEK LATER I MOVED  
TO LONDON, ENROLLING  
AT DRAMA COLLEGE. MY  
MOTHER SAID I BROKE  
HER HEART...



"...BUT IT WAS MY INTEGRITY THAT  
WAS IMPORTANT. IS THAT SO  
SELFISH? IT BELLS FOR SO  
LITTLE, BUT IT'S ALL WE  
HAVE LEFT IN THIS PLACE.

"IT IS THE VERY LAST  
INCH OF US...

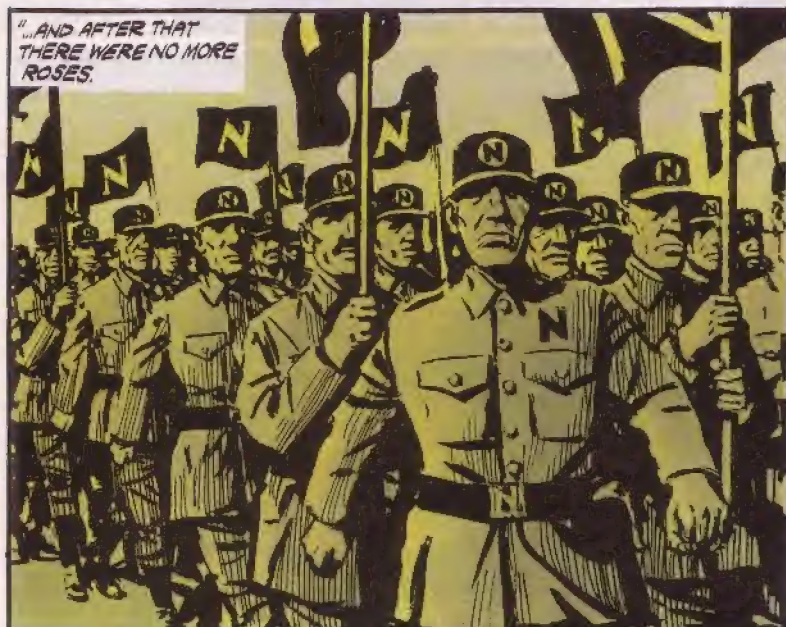
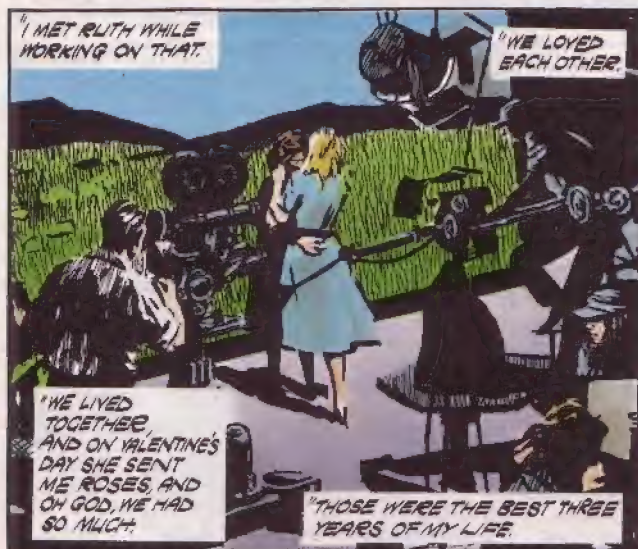
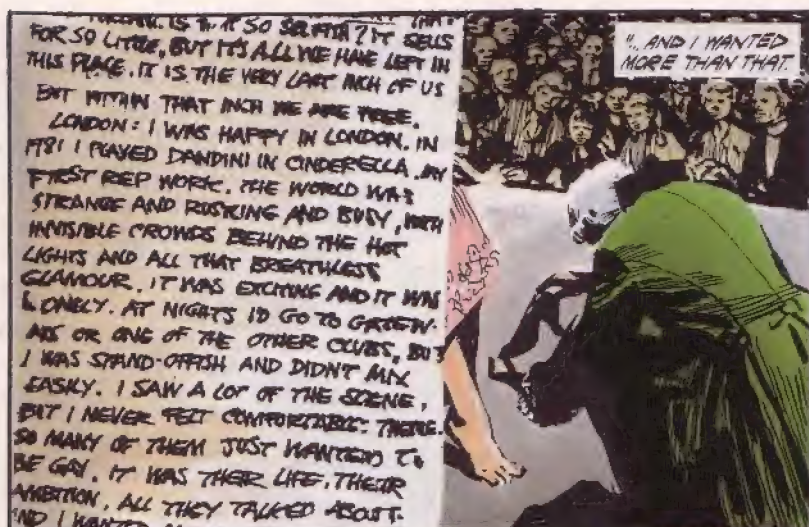


"...BUT WITHIN THAT  
INCH WE ARE FREE."

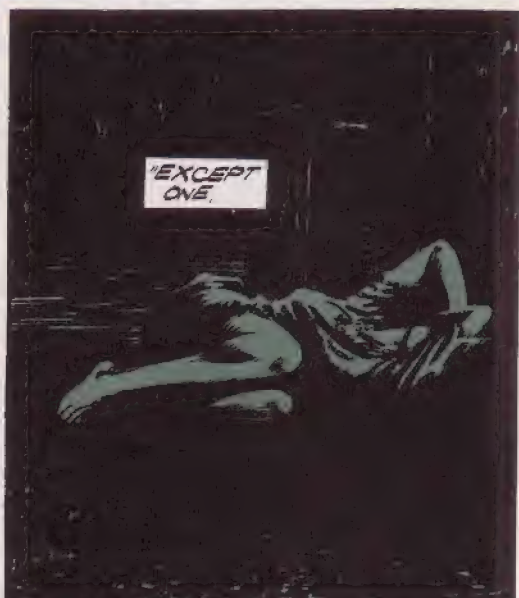
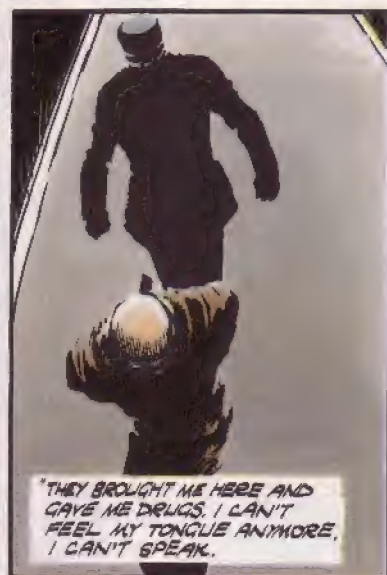
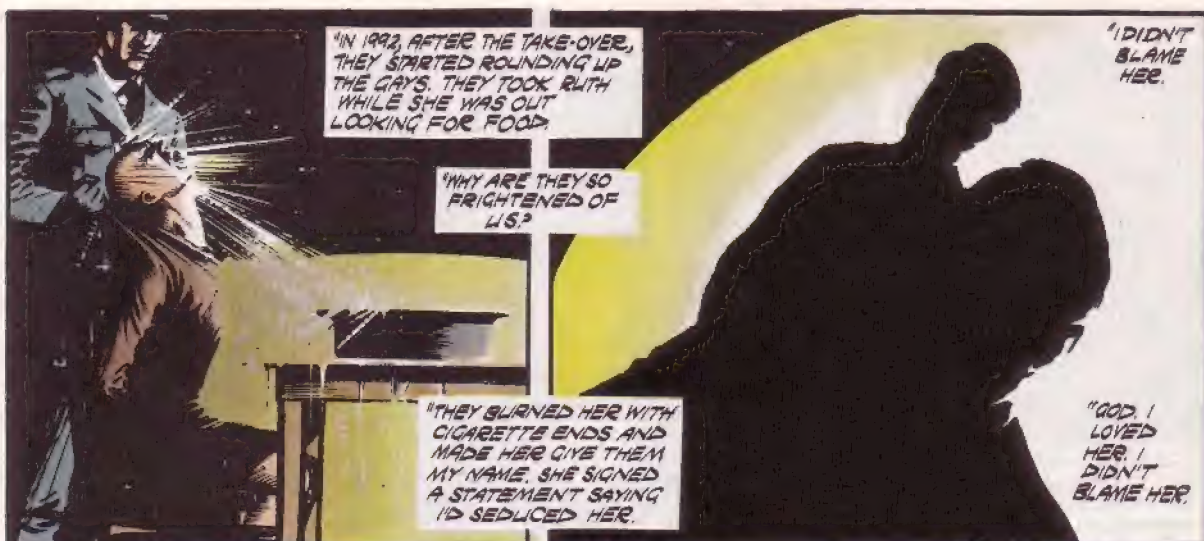








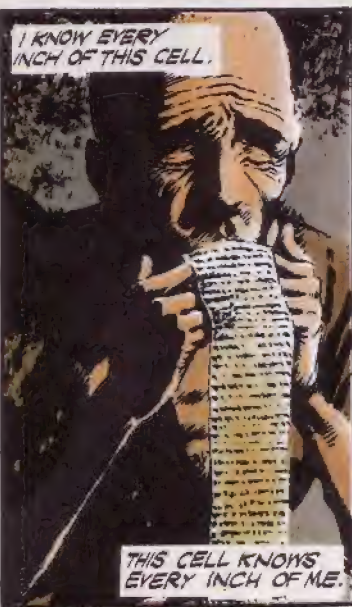
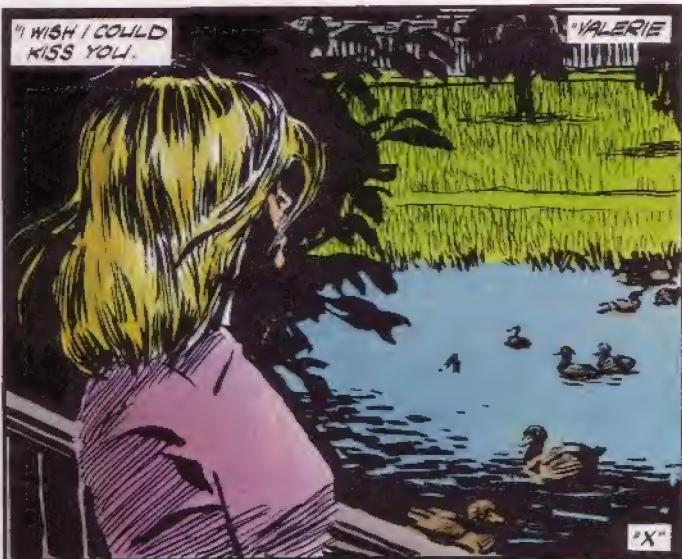
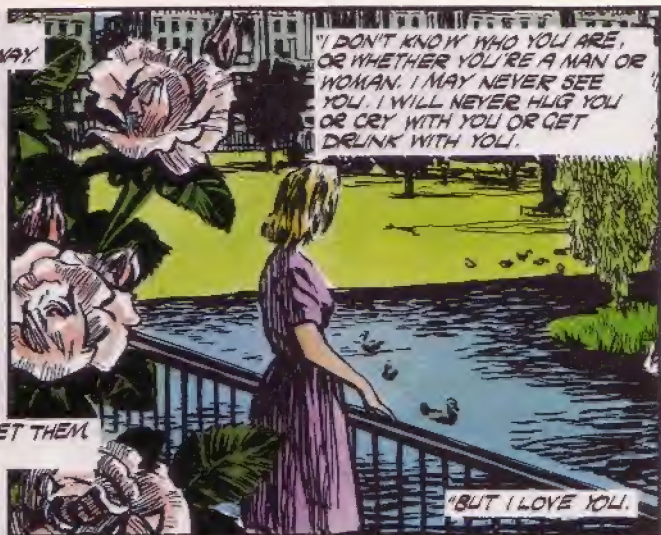
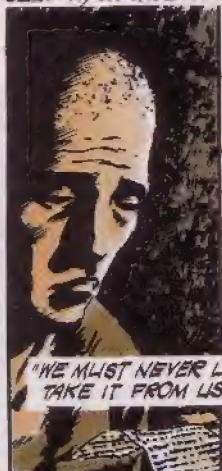




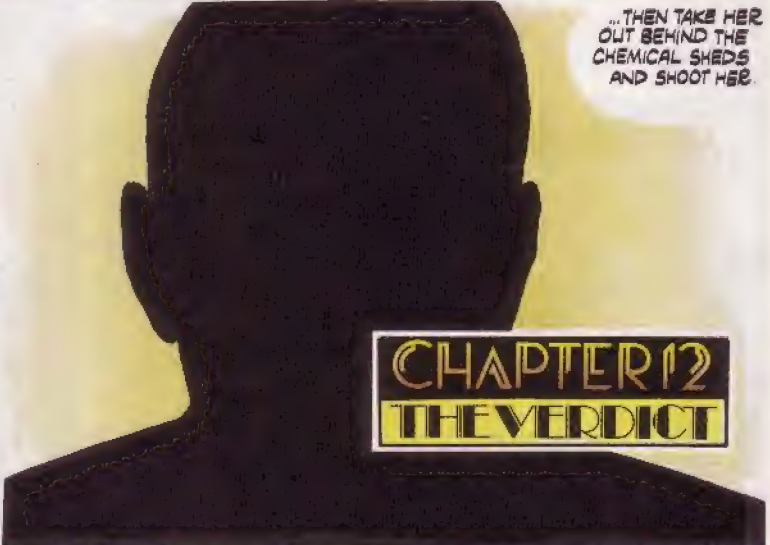
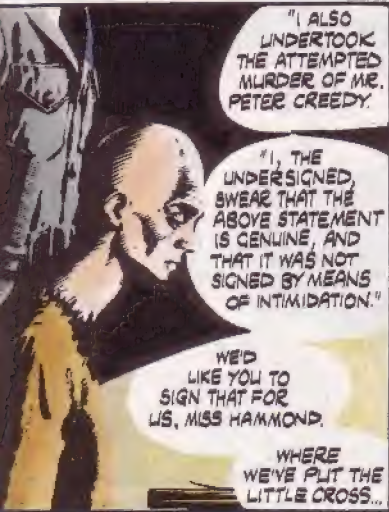
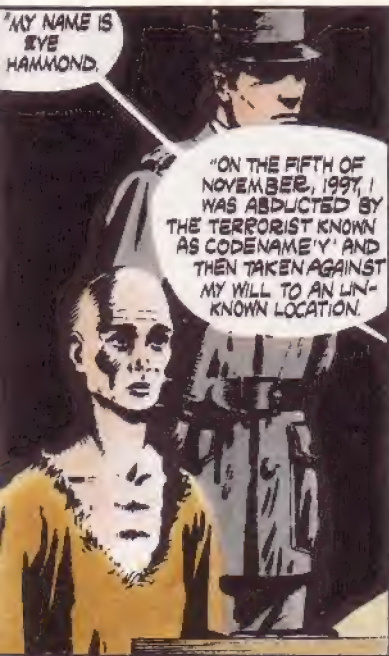




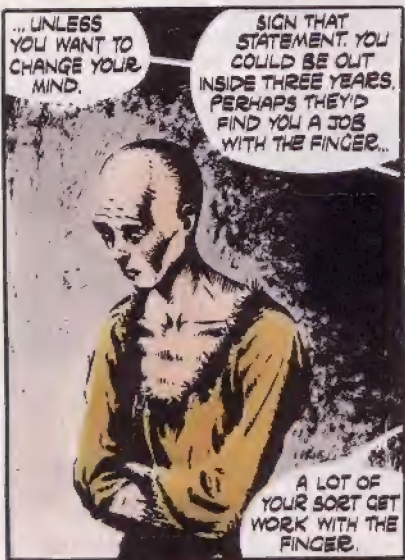
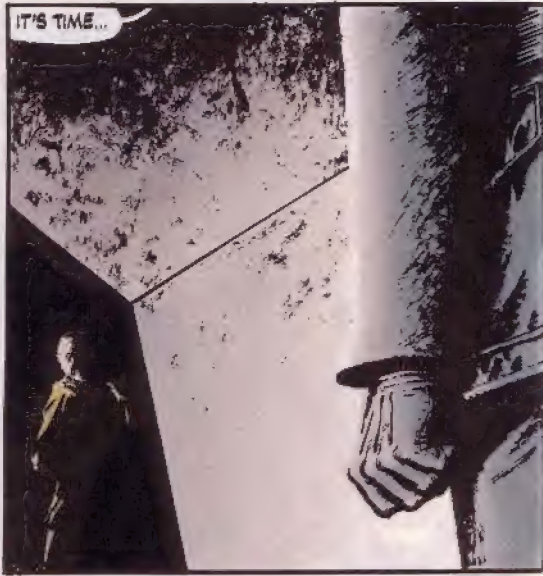
"HE MUST NEVER LOSE IT, OR SELL IT, OR GIVE IT AWAY."



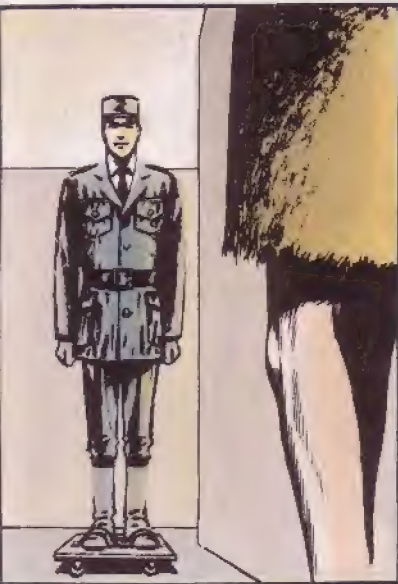
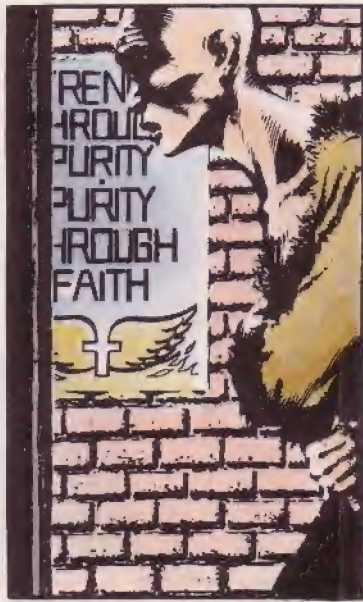




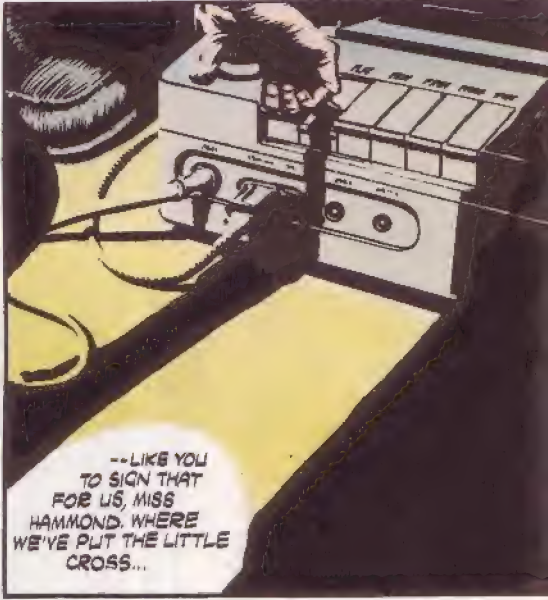
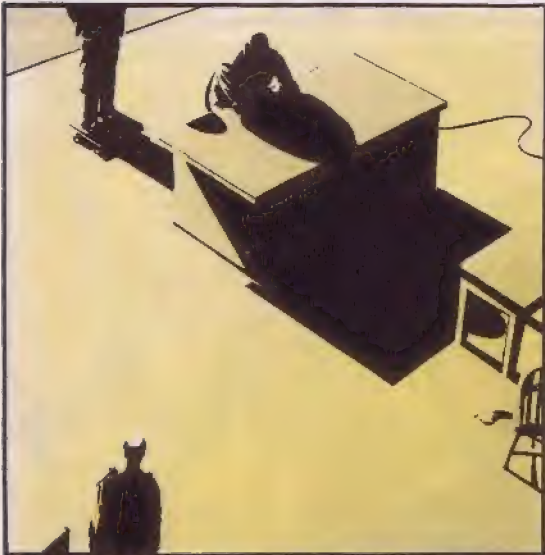












--LIKE YOU  
TO SIGN THAT  
FOR US, MISS  
HAMMOND. WHERE  
WE'VE PUT THE LITTLE  
CROSS...

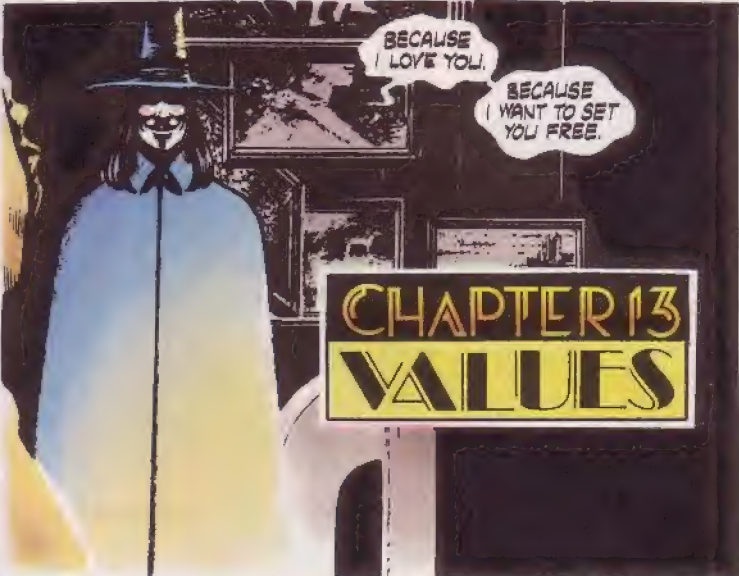








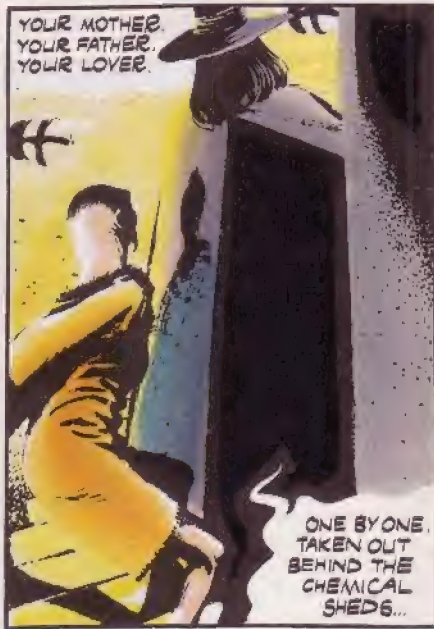
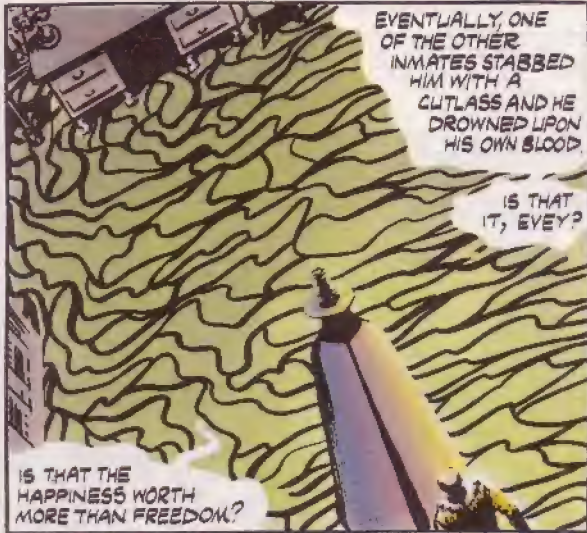
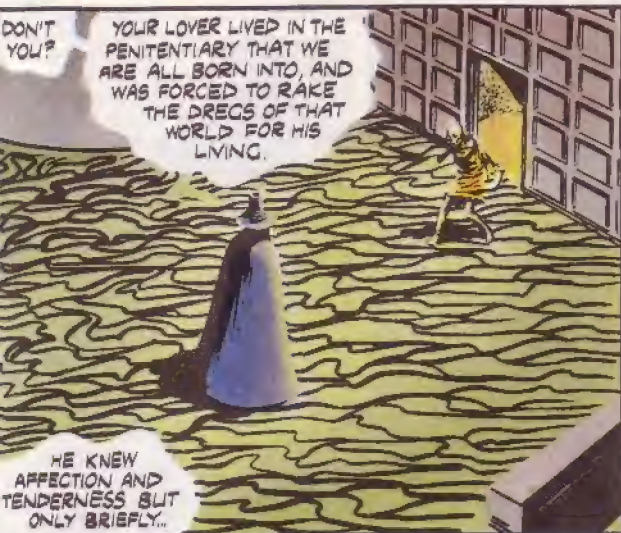
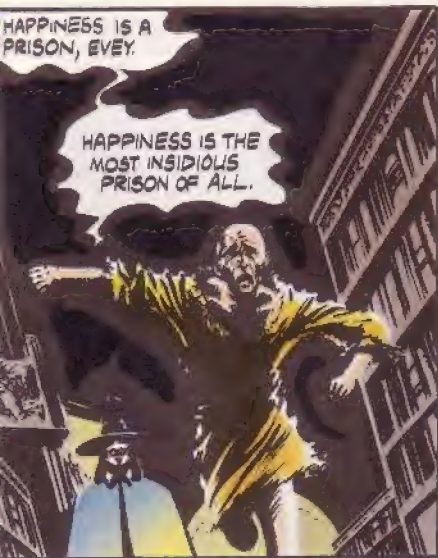








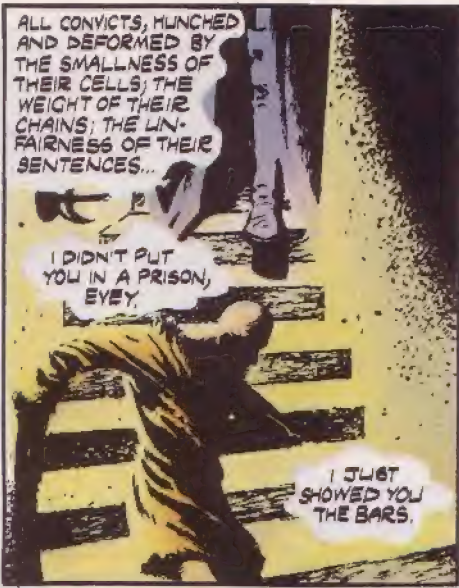








... AND SHOT.



ALL CONVICTS, HUNCHED AND DEFORMED BY THE SMALLNESS OF THEIR CELLS; THE WEIGHT OF THEIR CHAINS; THE UNFAIRNESS OF THEIR SENTENCES...

I DIDN'T PUT YOU IN A PRISON, EVEY.

I JUST SHOWED YOU THE BARS.



YOU'RE WRONG! IT'S JUST LIFE, THAT'S ALL! IT'S HOW LIFE IS! IT'S WHAT WE'VE GOT TO PUT UP WITH.

IT'S ALL WE'VE GOT. WHAT GIVES YOU THE RIGHT TO DECIDE IT'S NOT GOOD ENOUGH?



YOU'RE IN A PRISON, EVEY. YOU WERE BORN IN A PRISON. YOU'VE BEEN IN A PRISON SO LONG, YOU NO LONGER BELIEVE THERE'S A WORLD OUTSIDE.

SHUT UP! YOU'RE MAD! I DON'T WANT TO HEAR IT!



THAT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE AFRAID, EVEY. YOU'RE AFRAID BECAUSE YOU CAN FEEL FREEDOM. CLOSING IN UPON YOU. YOU'RE AFRAID BECAUSE FREEDOM IS TERRIFYING...

DON'T BACK AWAY FROM IT, EVEY. PART OF YOU UNDERSTANDS THE TRUTH EVEN AS PART PRETENDS NOT TO.

I CAN'T FEEL ANYTHING! THERE'S NOTHING TO FEEL! LEAVE ME ALONE!



WOMAN, THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT MOMENT OF YOUR LIFE.

DON'T RUN FROM IT.



I DON'T KNOW WHAT... YOU'RE...

OH GOD. OH GOD. I CAN'T BREATHE...

ASTHMA... WHHH-WHEN I WAS... A LITTLE GUY-GIRL...



GOOD. YOU'RE ALMOST THERE. GO CLOSER. FEEL THE SHAPE OF IT.

YOUR MOTHER DIED. THEY TOOK YOUR FATHER AWAY. THERE'S A LITTLE GIRL, EVEY, AND SHE'S SCREAMING...

A-HUH...

AA-HUHH...

OH, MAKE IT STOP.



MUMMY, DADDY, PLEASE MAKE IT STOP!!





WHAT... ARE YOU DOING TO ME? OH, I CAN'T BREATHE... AHHHH...

YOU WERE IN A CELL, EVEY. THEY OFFERED YOU A CHOICE BETWEEN THE DEATH OF YOUR PRINCIPLES AND THE DEATH OF YOUR BODY.



OH.OH, I CAN FEEL IT... OH WHAT IS IT... OH, I'M GOING TO DIE, I'M GOING TO BURST...

YOU SAID YOU'D RATHER DIE. YOU FACED THE FEAR OF YOUR OWN DEATH, AND YOU WERE CALM AND STILL.

TRY TO FEEL NOW WHAT YOU FELT THEN...



I... UHHH... OH GOD...

I FELT... HHHHH...



I... FELT... LIKE... AN ANGEL...



OH GOD, Y, OH GOD, I'M SO SCARED, I'M SO COLD...

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?



THE DOOR OF THE CAGE IS OPEN, EVEY.

ALL THAT YOU FEEL IS THE WIND FROM OUTSIDE. DON'T BE AFRAID.



TRY TO STAND. TRY TO WALK.

THE LIFT WILL TAKE US UP TO THE ROOF.

TO...THE ROOF...? OUTSIDE?



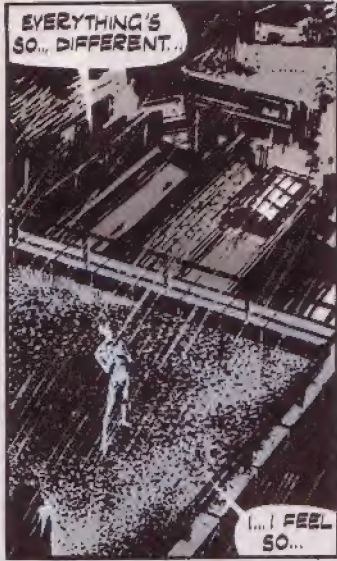
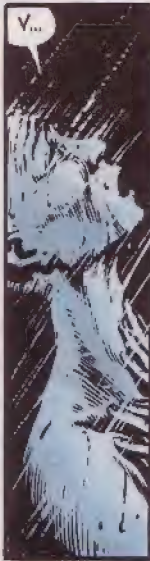
I DON'T WANT... TO BE BLINDFOLDED...

NO, EVEY. NO MORE BLINDFOLDS.



ALL THE BLINDFOLDS ARE GONE.







SEPTEMBER 3RD, 1998  
THE NOSE:

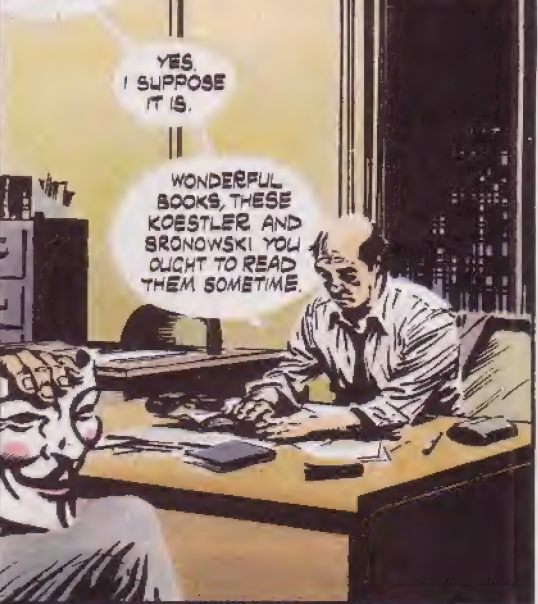


MR. FINCH?



I... I SAID 'DO YOU THINK IT'S ALL OVER?'

ALL OVER?



UH, YES, YES PERHAPS I WILL...



COBBLERS



PERHAPS YOU'RE RIGHT, THOUGH. PERHAPS I WILL BE GETTING ALONG NOW...

OH... I PICKED UP THE SUPPLIES FROM THE PHARMACY THAT YOU GAVE ME THAT CHITTY FOR.



HOPE THAT'S OKAY...



THAT'S FINE.

GOOD NIGHT, LAD.

# CHAPTER 14 MIGNETTES

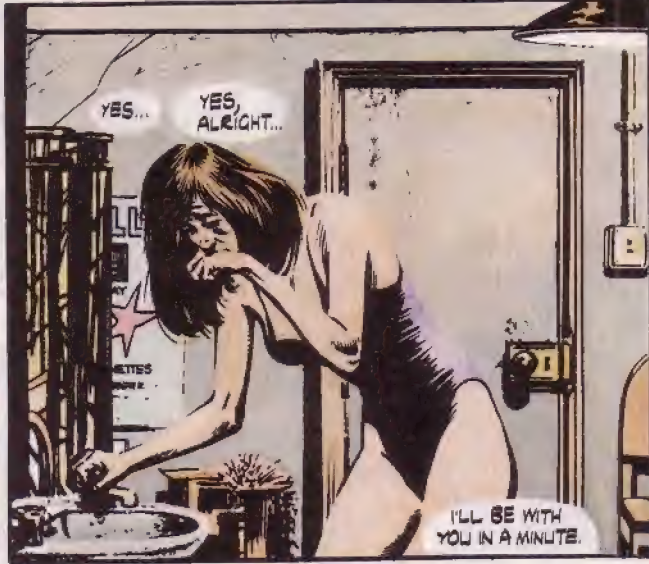
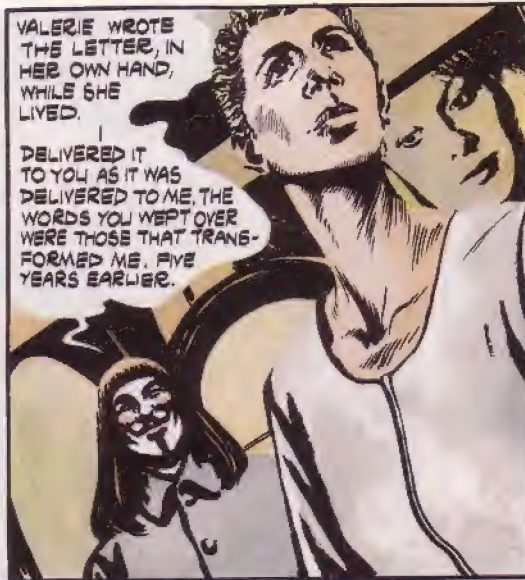
THE SHADOW GALLERY:



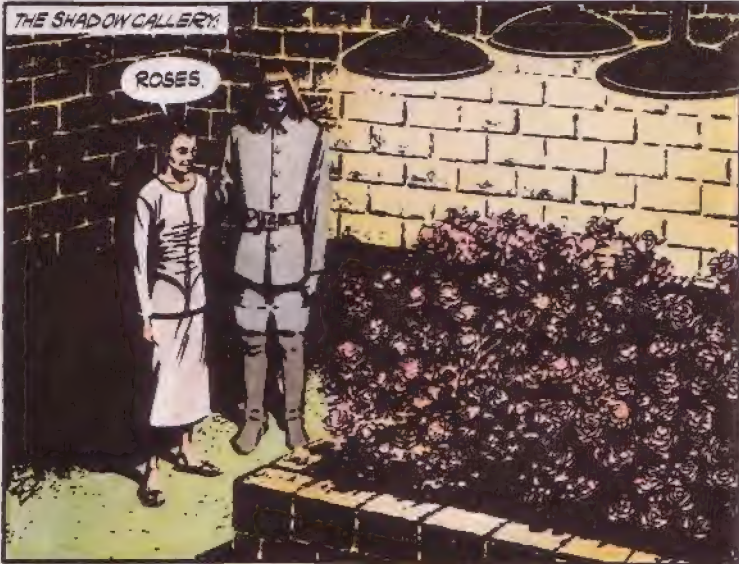




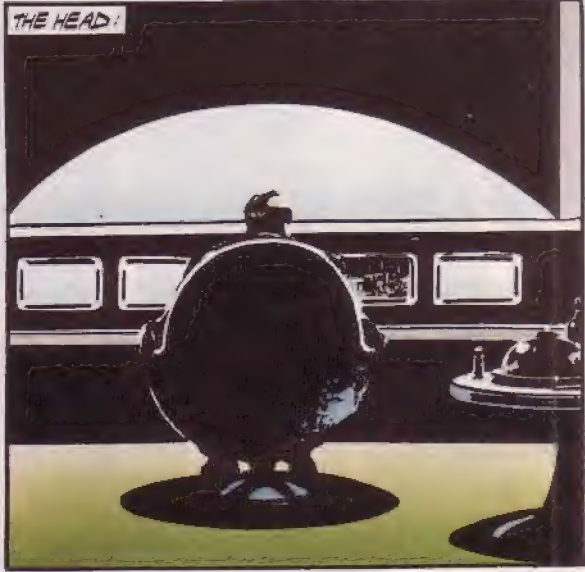








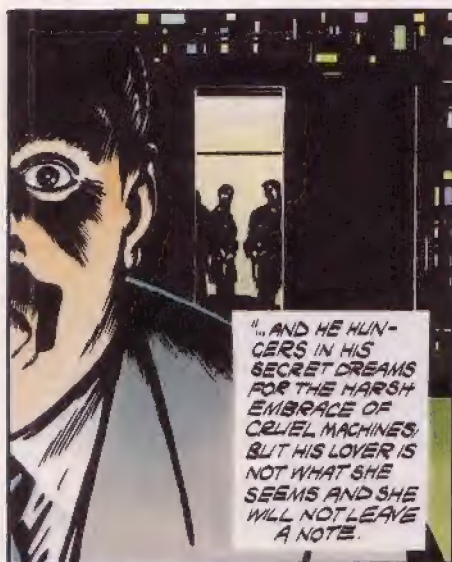




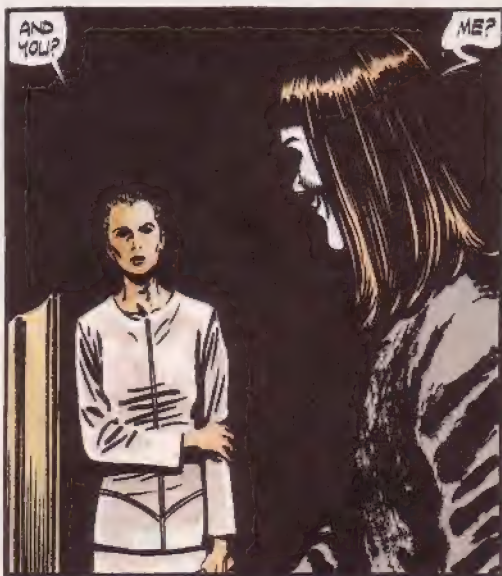




YOU CALLED OUT.  
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?









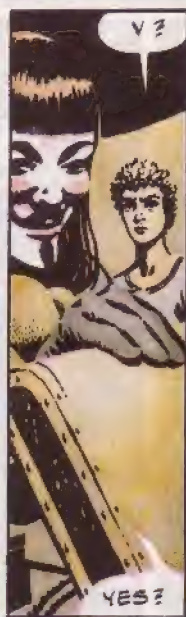


THE LAND OF DO-AS-YOU-PLEASE

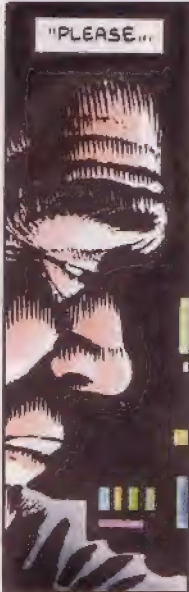
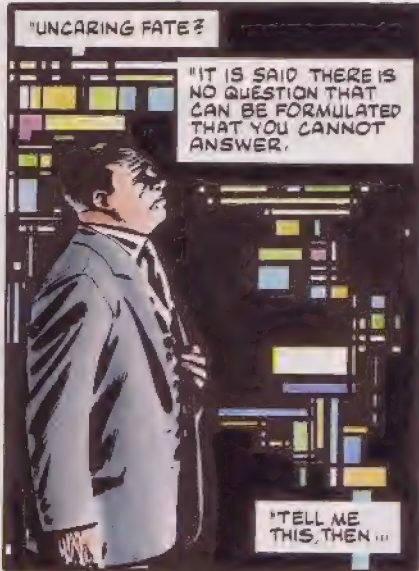
















OH MY GOD.

YOU... AREN'T YOU FINCH'S MAN?



WHAT HAPPENED HERE? WE WERE JUST ARRIVING WHEN WE HEARD THE EXPLOSION...



M-MR. HEYER?

BOMB... I WAS JUST... COMING OUT OF THE BUILDING...

MR. ETHERIDGE, SIR... HE WAS WORKING LATE...



ETHERIDGE? WHAT IS HE HURT?

H-HE'S DEAD, SIR.

OH GOD. I THINK I'M GOING TO BE SICK...



UUGH,

CONRAD, WHAT'S GOING ON? YOU JUST RAN OFF AND LEFT ME!

TH-THERE'S BEEN A BOMB. THE TOWER...



THE EYE AND THE EAR ARE BOTH CRIPPLED! I'VE GOT TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THE LEADER STRAIGHT AWAY...

HALF LONDON HEARD THAT BANG. THE MOUTH WILL HAVE TO ISSUE A STATEMENT...



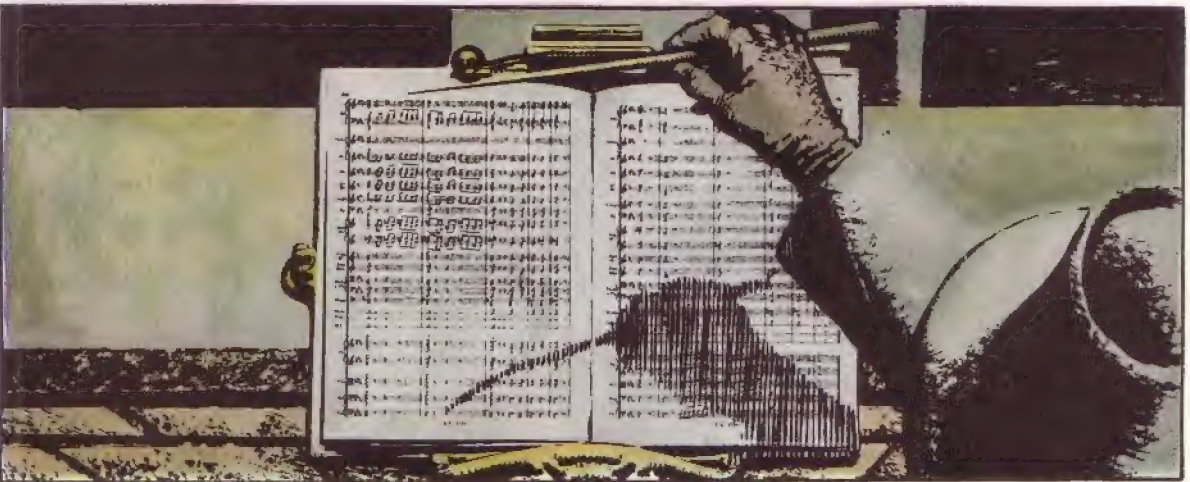
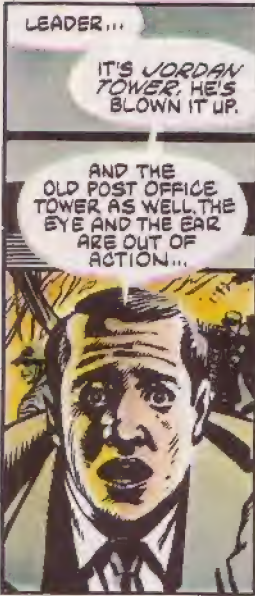
ANOTHER 'SCHEDULED DEMOLITION'? WHO'S GOING TO BELIEVE IT AFTER THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT AND THE OLD BAILEY? WHAT CAN THEY POSSIBLY SAY?

I DON'T KNOW, ANYTHING.

AT A TIME LIKE THIS, ANYTHING'S BETTER THAN SILENCE...













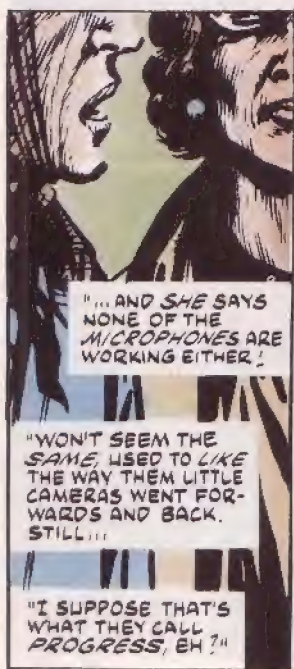


"WHAT, AN' NO RADIO NEITHER? WELL, THAT'S BLOODY MARVELOUS! 'ERE'S ME PAYIN' LICENSE MONEY AND..."

"'ERE, 'ANG ABOUT: YOU SAID 'E BOMBED THE G.P.O. TOWER AS WELL, DOES THAT MEAN THEY CAN'T..."



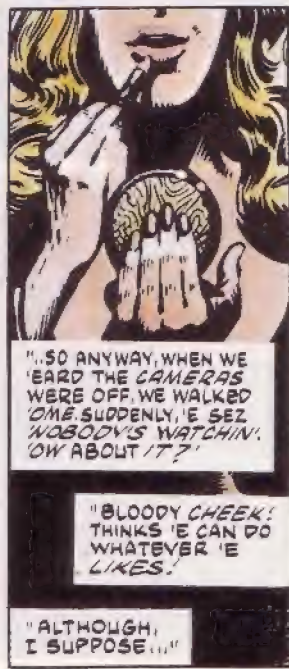
BOLLOCKS.



"... AND SHE SAYS NONE OF THE MICROPHONES ARE WORKING EITHER!"

"WON'T SEEM THE SAME, USED TO LIKE THE WAY THEM LITTLE CAMERAS WENT FORWARDS AND BACK. STILL..."

"I SUPPOSE THAT'S WHAT THEY CALL PROGRESS, EH?"

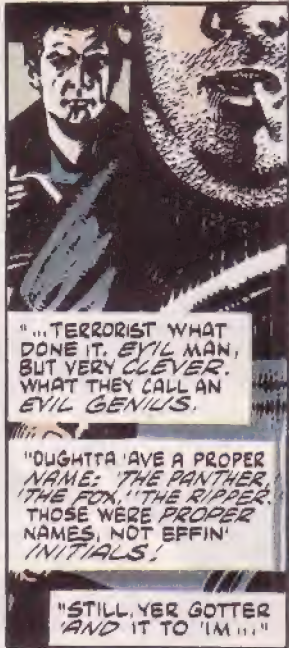
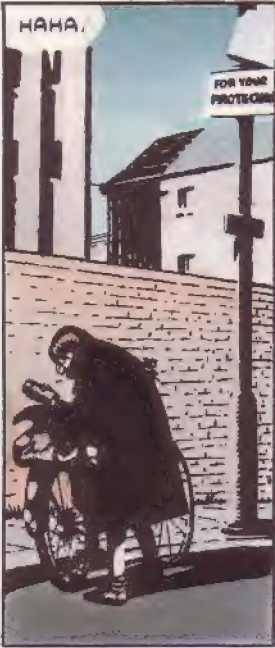


"... SO ANYWAY, WHEN WE 'EARD THE CAMERAS WERE OFF, WE WALKED 'OME. SUDDENLY, 'E SEZ 'NOBODY'S WATCHIN'. OW ABOUT IT?"

"BLOODY CHEEK! THINKS 'E CAN DO WHATEVER 'E LIKES!"

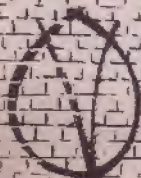
"ALTHOUGH, I SUPPOSE..."





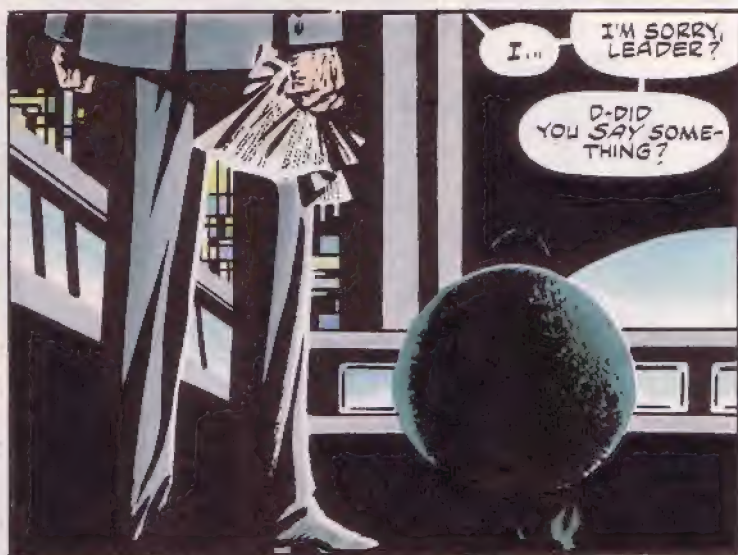
# CHAPTER 1

## VOX POPULI

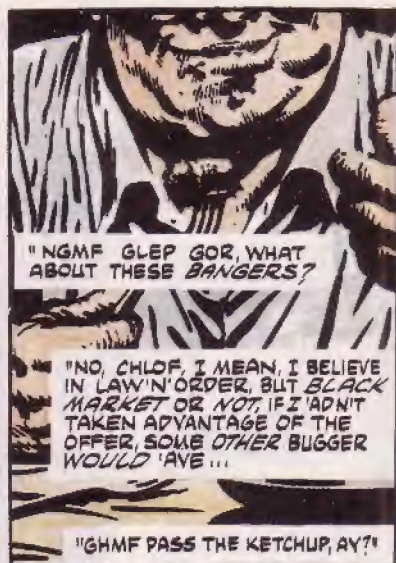


BOLLOCKS





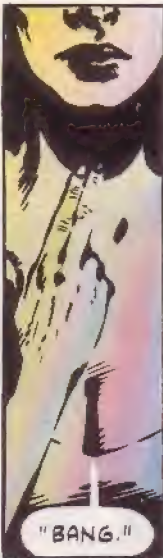












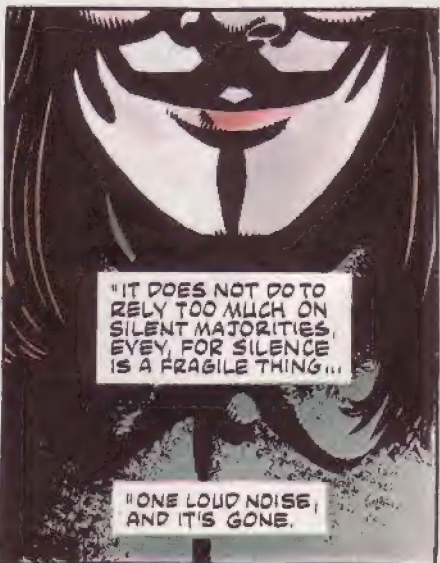
"... 'APPENIN' OVER EAST FINCHLEY TONIGHT."

"WHAT I 'ERD, THIS NOBBY, 'IZ BIRD GOT FINGERED OVER A TIN O'BEANS, ONLY SHOT THE POOR LOW, DIDN'T THEY? SO, LIKE, EVERYBODY'S TOOLED UP, AN'."



"... JUST AS IF SHE WAS A PAKI! WELL, THEY'VE 'AD IT! THEY COME ROUND 'ERE TONIGHT, THEY'RE GUNNA GEDDA KICK IN THE 'ED..."

"A BIG KICK."



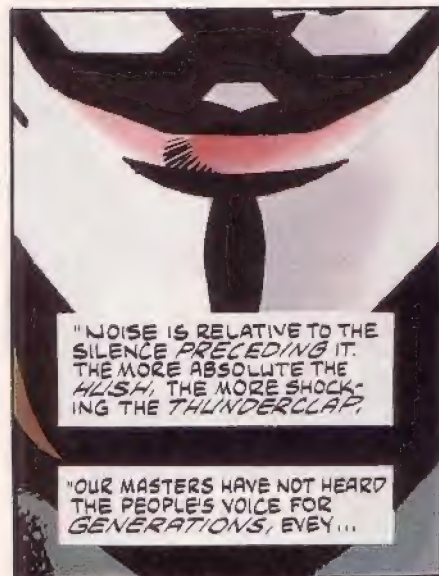
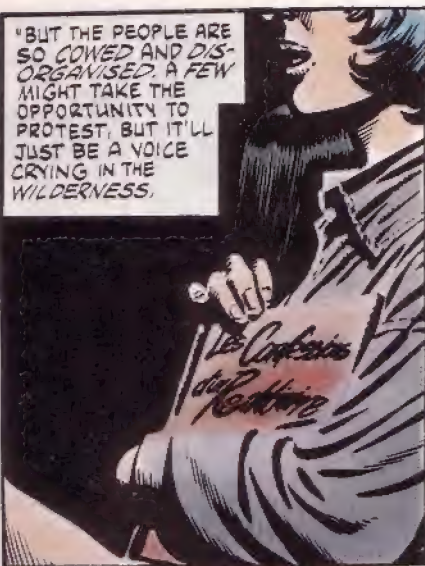
"IT DOES NOT DO TO RELY TOO MUCH ON SILENT MAJORITIES, EYEV, FOR SILENCE IS A FRAGILE THING..."

"ONE LOUD NOISE, AND IT'S GONE."





"BUT THE PEOPLE ARE SO COWED AND DIS-ORGANISED, A FEW MIGHT TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROTEST, BUT IT'LL JUST BE A VOICE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS."



"NOISE IS RELATIVE TO THE SILENCE PRECEDING IT. THE MORE ABSOLUTE THE HUSH, THE MORE SHOCKING THE THUNDERCLAP."

"OUR MASTERS HAVE NOT HEARD THE PEOPLE'S VOICE FOR GENERATIONS, EYEB..."




"...AND IT IS MUCH, MUCH LOUDER THAN THEY CARE TO REMEMBER."





NOVEMBER 6TH, 1998:




FINGERWAGON  
VICTOR-CHARLEY-NINER,  
REQUEST ASSISTANCE,  
CROUCH END..

CAN'T FOLLOW  
THEM INTO BRIXTON.  
HALF THE MEN NEED  
CHOLERA JABS,  
AND..

URGENTLY  
REQUEST

BEFORE LOOTERS  
REACH DEPTFORD MARSHES.  
WE NEED TWO MORE  
CARS AND...




GREEN PARK.  
MOST PEOPLE IN-  
DOORS, BUT A CROWD  
FORMING IN KING'S  
ROAD AREA. SEND

RGENCY.  
ALL CARS IN  
TOTTENHAM  
AREA

CK'S SAKE,  
MAN, GET US  
SOME BACK-  
UP HERE

WHAT'S  
THAT?




A LATE SEVENTIES  
RADIO / CASSETTE. YOU  
CAN TUNE THEM TO THE  
POLICE BAND, EVEN  
IN A BROADCASTING  
BLACKOUT.

PROTESTING  
THE EXECUTIONS.  
IF WE CHARGE,  
THEY MIGHT

RECOMMEND  
TEAR GAS OR

VICTOR-  
CHARLEY-NINER,  
COME /V/, PLEASE.

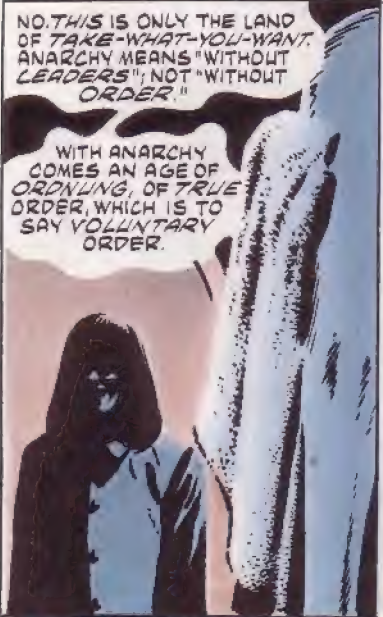


THE OLD BROADWATER  
FARM ESTATE. TELL  
MR. CREEDEY THERE'S  
FIRES...

ALL THIS  
RIOT AND UPROAR,  
Y... IS THIS  
ANARCHY?


IS THIS  
THE LAND OF  
DO-AS-YOU-  
PLEASE?

PLEASE  
RESPOND. REPEAT:  
VICTOR-CHARLEY-  
NINER...



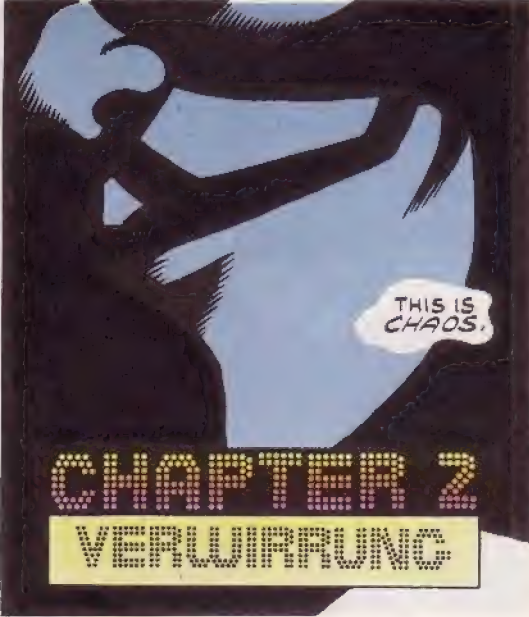
NO. THIS IS ONLY THE LAND  
OF TAKE-WHAT-YOU-WANT.  
ANARCHY MEANS "WITHOUT  
LEADERS", NOT "WITHOUT  
ORDER."

WITH ANARCHY  
COMES AN AGE OF  
ORDNLING, OF TRUE  
ORDER, WHICH IS TO  
SAY VOLUNTARY  
ORDER.



THIS AGE OF ORDNLING  
WILL BEGIN WHEN  
THE MAD AND INCO-  
HERENT CYCLE OF  
VERWIRRLING THAT  
THESE BULLETINS  
REVEAL HAS RUN ITS  
COURSE.

THIS  
IS NOT  
ANARCHY, EVE.

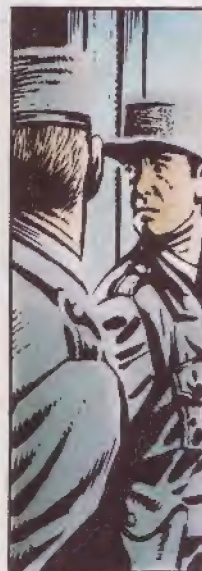
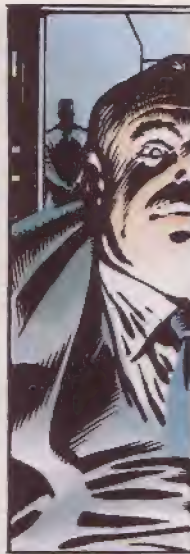


THIS IS  
CHAOS.

## CHAPTER 2

### VERWIRRLING







INVOLUNTARY ORDER BREEDS DISSATISFACTION, MOTHER OF DISORDER, PARENT OF THE GUILLOTINE.

AUTHORITARIAN SOCIETIES ARE LIKE FORMATION SKATING. INTRICATE, MECHANICALLY PRECISE AND ABOVE ALL, PRECARIOUS. BENEATH CIVILISATION'S FRAGILE CRUST, COLD CHAOS CHURNS...

"...AND THERE ARE PLACES WHERE THE ICE IS TREACHEROUSLY THIN."

EXIT

YUR UNDER ARREST.

AAA!

NAH, AM OARNY KIDDEN.

OH! OH GOD, YOU ...

L-LOOK, I'VE GOT THE MONEY. DID YOU GET THE THING, LIKE I ASKED?

TO DEFEND MYSELF WITH?

OH AYE, THES'LL DEFEND YE, RIGHT 'NUFF.

THES'LL DEFEND SOMEBODY'S ENNARDS ENTAE THE GUTTER.

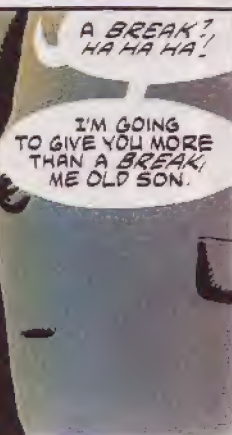
AD ADVISE YE TE GET ET HOME QUECK. EF YUR SERCHED, AY NEVER SEEN YE IN MA LIFE.

N-NO, I UNDER- STAND. I'LL TAKE IT STRAIGHT HOME. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

THANK YOU.

YUR WULCOME.









AUTHORITY ALLOWS TWO ROLES: THE TORTURER AND THE TORTURED; TWISTS PEOPLE INTO JOYLESS MANNEQUINS THAT FEAR AND HATE, WHILE CULTURE PLUNGES INTO THE ABYSS.

AUTHORITY DEFORMS THE REARING OF THEIR CHILDREN, MAKES A COCKFIGHT OF THEIR LOVE...



ALL RIGHT, CONRAD. THAT'S ENOUGH. GET ME A TOWEL.

WHEN DID THE LEADER AUTHORIZE CREEDEY TO RECRUIT A GOON SQUAD?



LATE THIS AFTER-NOON, DO YOU WANT YOUR ROBE, HELEN?

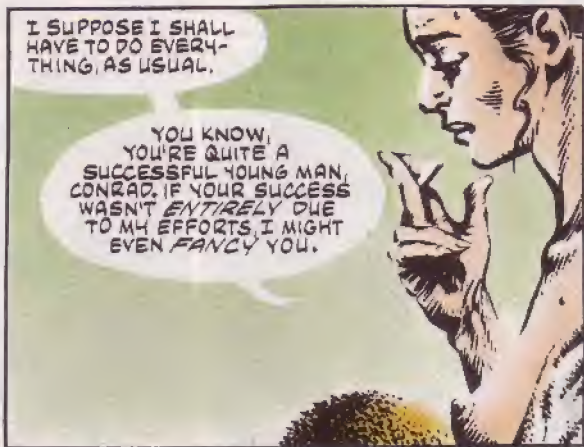
NO.

DOESN'T SUSAN REALIZE THAT CREEDEY'S ONLY WAITING FOR HIM TO CRACK COMPLETELY BEFORE MOVING IN WITH HIS PRIVATE ARMY AND STAGING A COUP?



THE LEADER MAY JUST BE UNDER STRAIN...

BALLS, CONRAD, HIS MIND'S DISINTEGRATING... AND WHEN IT GOES, I WANT YOU IN THE NUMBER ONE SEAT AND NOT THAT SECONDARY-SCHOOL OIK, CREEDEY.



I SUPPOSE I SHALL HAVE TO DO EVERYTHING, AS USUAL.

YOU KNOW, YOU'RE QUITE A SUCCESSFUL YOUNG MAN, CONRAD. IF YOUR SUCCESS WASN'T ENTIRELY DUE TO MY EFFORTS, I MIGHT EVEN FANCY YOU.



NOW, I'VE GOT THINGS TO ORGANISE IN THE MORNING, SO I'M GOING TO BED. I EXPECT I SHALL BE ASLEEP WHEN YOU COME UP.

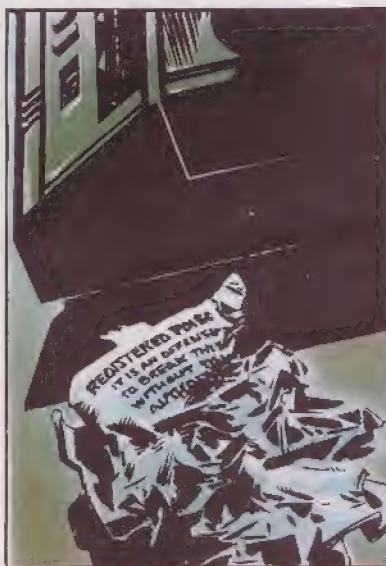
YOU WON'T BE NEEDING THE LIGHT ON IN HERE, WILL YOU?



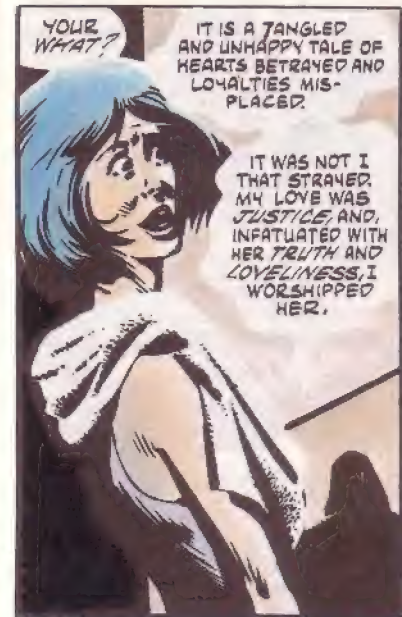
AUTHORITY'S COLLAPSE SENDS CRACKS THROUGH BEDROOM, BOARDROOM, CHURCH AND SCHOOL ALIKE. ALL IS MISRULE.

EQUALITY AND FREEDOM ARE NOT LUXURIES TO LIGHTLY CAST ASIDE. WITHOUT THEM, ORDER CANNOT LONG ENDURE BEFORE APPROACHING DEPTHS BEYOND IMAGINING.





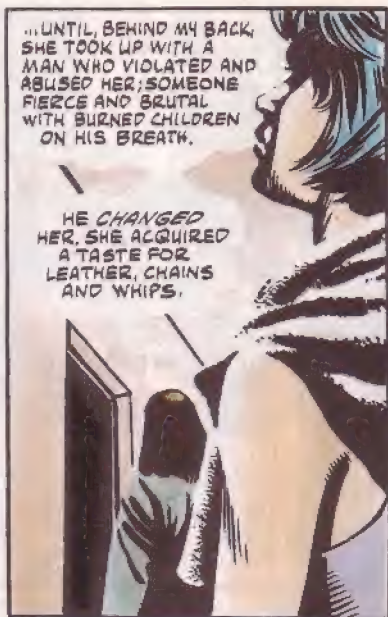




YOUR WHAT?

IT IS A TANGLED AND UNHAPPY TALE OF HEARTS BETRAYED AND LOYALTIES MIS-PLACED.

IT WAS NOT I THAT STRAYED, MY LOVE WAS JUSTICE, AND, INFATUATED WITH HER TRUTH AND LOVELINESS, I WORSHIPPED HER.



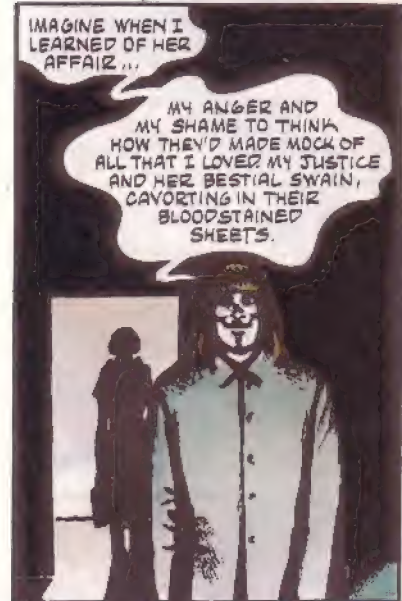
...UNTIL, BEHIND MY BACK, SHE TOOK UP WITH A MAN WHO VIOLATED AND ABUSED HER; SOMEONE FIERCE AND BRUTAL WITH BURNED CHILDREN ON HIS BREATH.

HE CHANGED HER, SHE ACQUIRED A TASTE FOR LEATHER, CHAINS AND WHIPS.



THE JUSTICE THAT I LOVED WAS GONE; WHO HAD SUCH KINDLY EYES; WHO TOOK SUCH SMALL AND CAREFUL STEPS...

TRANSFORMED, SHE GLARED THROUGH NARROW SLITS AND GROUND GOOD MEN BENEATH HER VICIOUS HEEL.



IMAGINE WHEN I LEARNED OF HER AFFAIR...

MY ANGER AND MY SHAME TO THINK HOW THEY'D MADE MOCK OF ALL THAT I LOVED MY JUSTICE AND HER BESTIAL SWAIN, CAVORTING IN THEIR BLOODSTAINED SHEETS.



STILL, ALL IN LOVE AND WAR IS FAIR, THEY SAY, THIS BEING BOTH; AND TURNABOUT'S FAIR PLAY.

THOUGH I MUST BEAR A CUCKOLD'S HORNS, THEY'RE NOT A CROWN THAT I SHALL BEAR ALONE.



YOU SEE, MY RIVAL, THOUGH INCLINED TO ROAM, POSSESSED AT HOME A WIFE THAT HE ADOR'D.

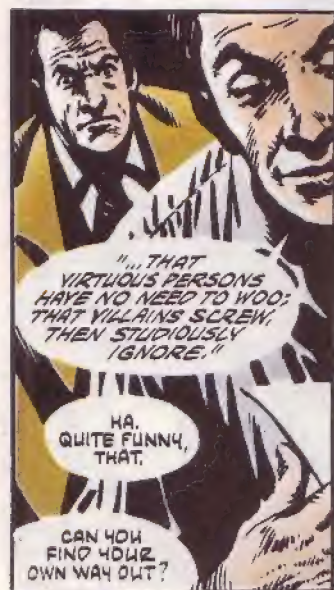
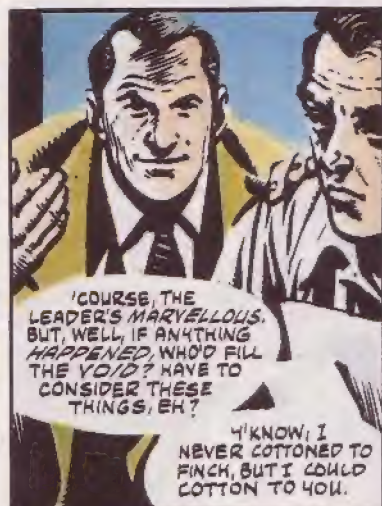
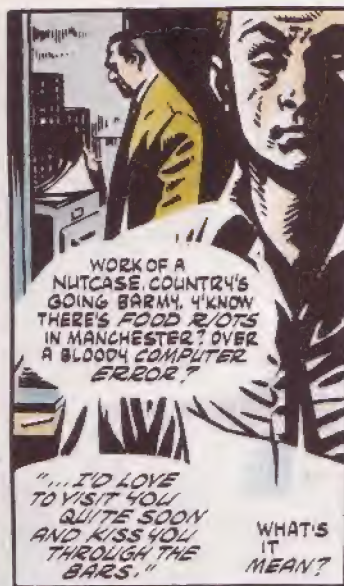
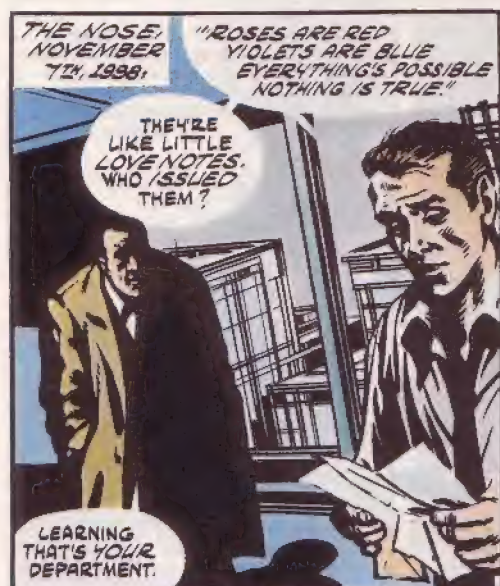
HE'LL RUE HIS PROMISCUITY, THE ROGUE WHO STOLE MY ONLY LOVE, WHEN HE'S INFORMED HOW MANY YEARS IT IS...



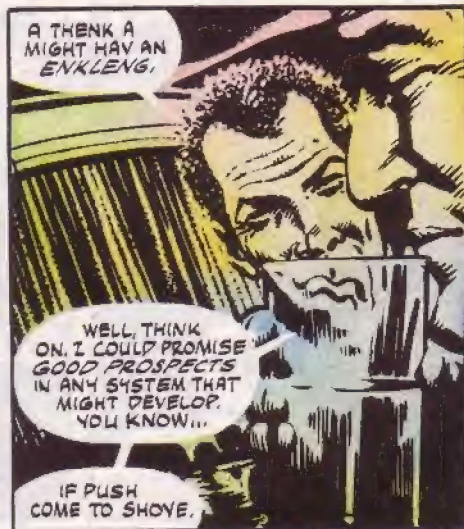
... SINCE FIRST I BEDDED HIS.



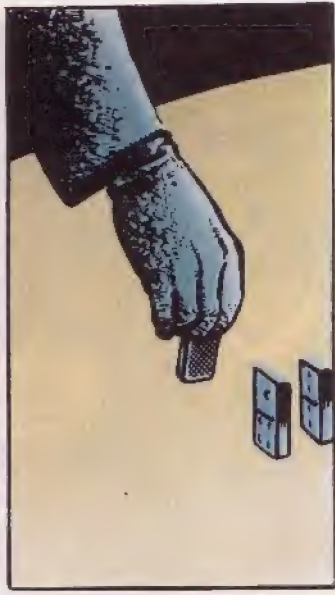
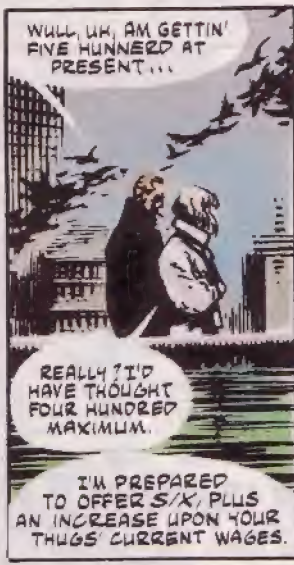




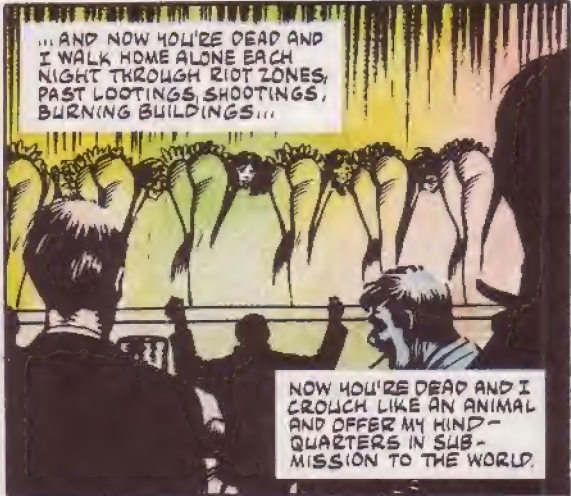




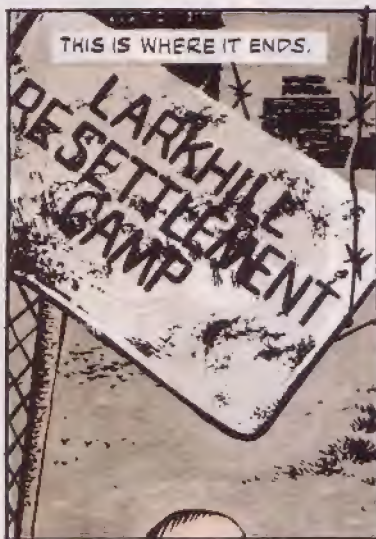
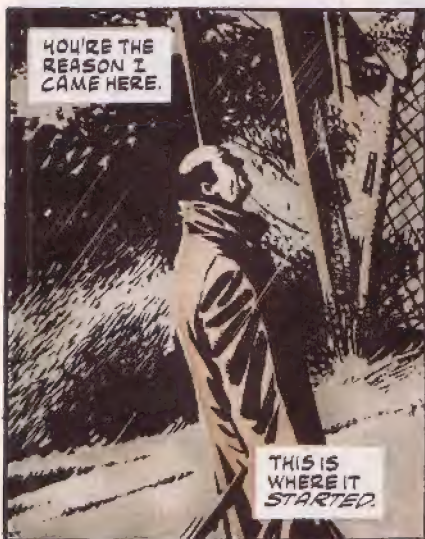




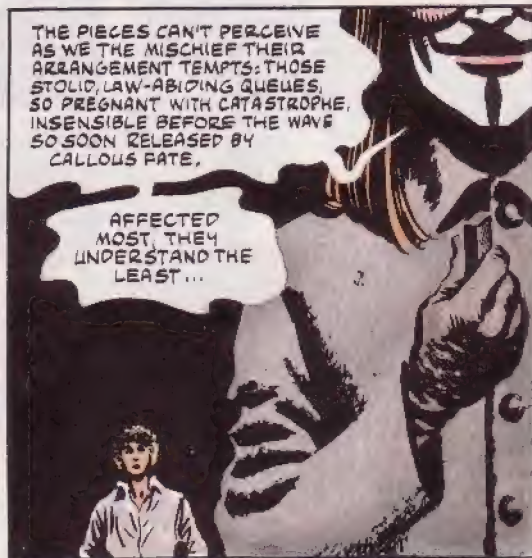
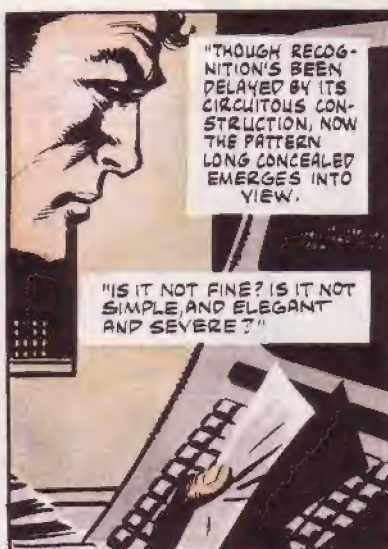




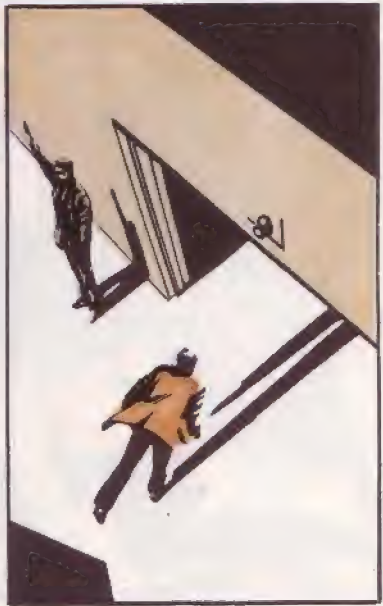
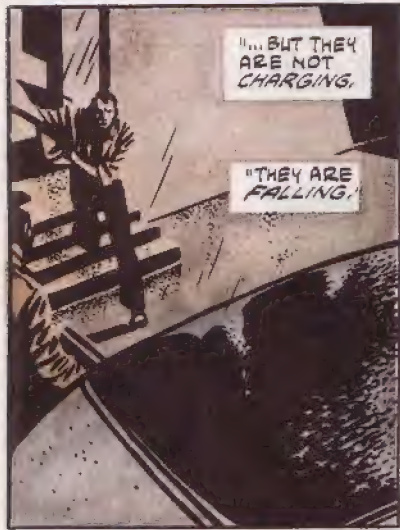




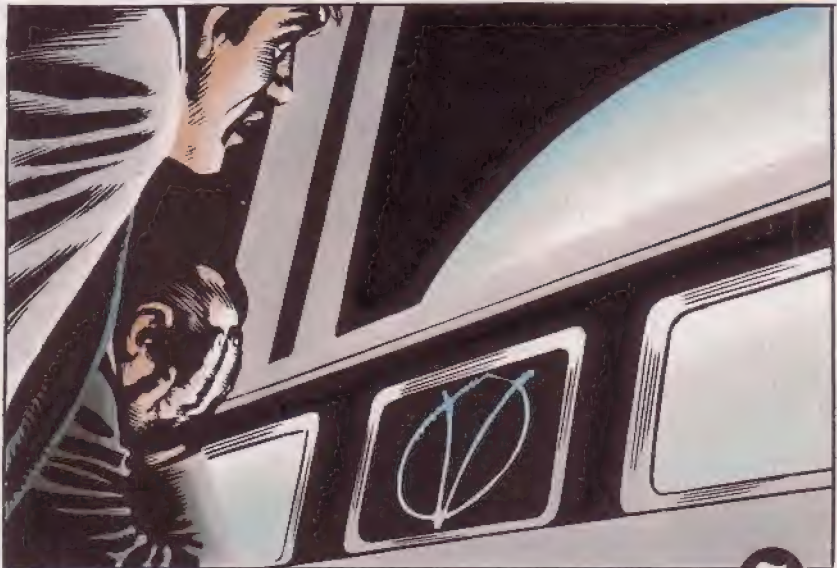




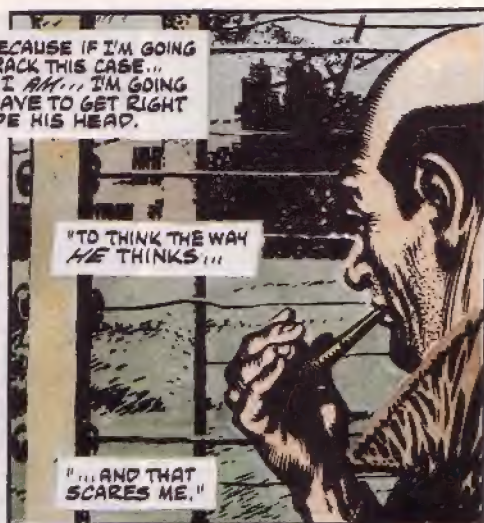
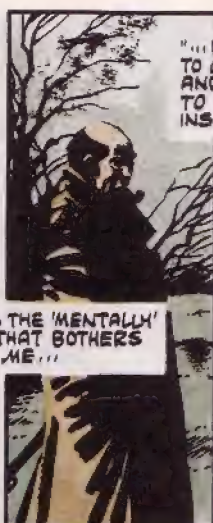
















I'VE NEVER SEEN THE CAMPS BEFORE, ONLY PHOTOGRAPHS. SO THIS IS THE TOILET WE FLUSHED ALL THOSE PEOPLE DOWN...



FOUR TABLETS. I WONDER IF THAT'S ENOUGH? I WONDER IF THAT'S TOO MANY?

OH WELL.

AGAINST MY TONGUE LIKE LITTLE PIECES OF SOAP... MY SALIVA TASTING OF TINFOIL... A BUBBLE OF APPREHENSION FORMING LOW IN MY STOMACH...



I SWALLOW, FEELING AS IF I'M LETTING GO OF SOMETHING.

THERE.


NOW I'M STRAPPED IN, COUNTDOWN TICKING FROM BOWEL TO BLOOD-STREAM TO BRAIN, TOWARDS TAKE-OFF, BUT I'VE NEVER FLOWN BEFORE. WHAT'S SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN?



NOTHING. NOTHING YET. BETTER TAKE A LOOK ROUND, WHILE IT'S LIGHT.


THESE MUST BE THE OVENS, OVENS FOR PEOPLE, PEOPLE OVENS...

NO, NO USE: STILL CAN'T MAKE IT SEEM REAL... IF I'D KNOWN THIS WAS HAPPENING, WOULD I STILL HAVE JOINED THE PARTY?



PROBABLY. NO BETTER ALTERNATIVES.

WE COULDN'T LET THE CHAOS AFTER THE WAR CONTINUE. ANY SOCIETY'S BETTER THAN THAT. WE NEEDED ORDER...



...OR AT LEAST, I DID, LOSING CYNTH AND LITTLE PAUL LIKE THAT, EVERYTHING WAS DISINTEGRATING AND I JUST WANTED...

...TO...



EUGH...



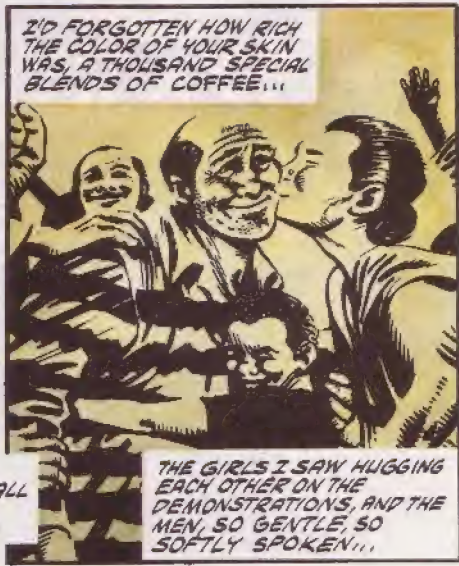
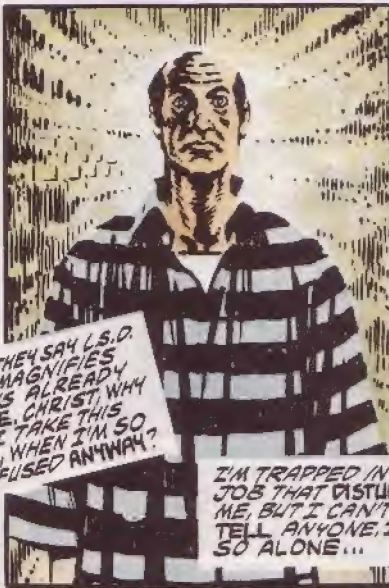
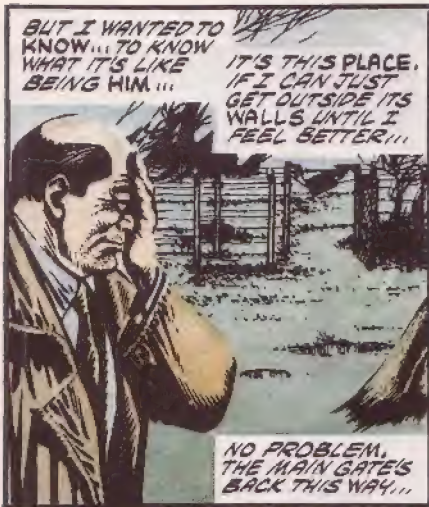

I SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE IT.

I SHOULDN'T HAVE TAKEN THE L.S.D.

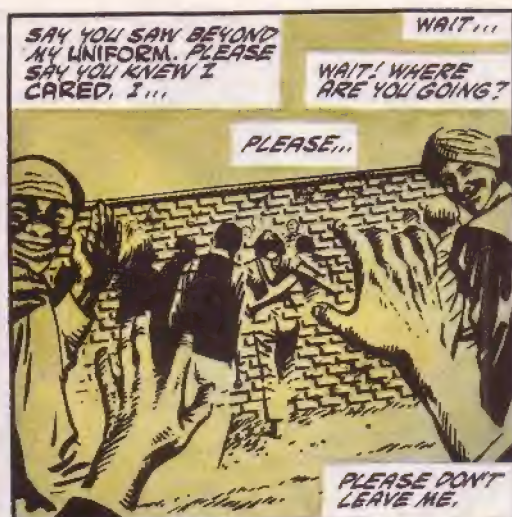
NOT HERE.















OH ERIC, LOOK AT YOU IN YOUR PYJAMAS! GO BACK TO BED. I'M JUST MAKING BACON AND EGGS TO KEEP YOUR STRENGTH UP.

DELIA?

DELIA, I'M SO MIXED UP IF I COULD JUST GET THINGS STRAIGHT...



WHAT THINGS?

WHAT I'M DOING HERE, WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME...

I REMEMBER THAT I CAME HERE TO FIND SOMETHING OUT... SOMETHING VERY VITAL TO VARIOUS VENTURES... I WAS PLANNING TO TAKE A DRUG...



A DRUG? WELL, THAT'S WHAT I'M HERE FOR. PLEASE ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVE...


...AS FOR YOUR EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS, PERHAPS YOU SHOULD TALK TO TONY LILLIMAN. HE'S OUR PADRE.

LILLIMAN? I THOUGHT HE WAS A BISHOP?



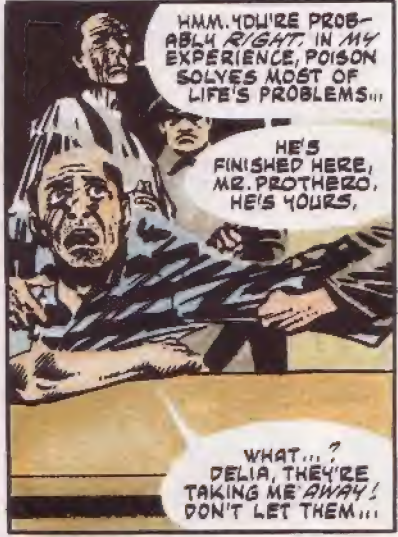
NO, MERELY A PAWN.

NOW, TELL ME: WHEN DID YOU STOP BELIEVING IN GOD?



B-BUT... I NEVER SAID...

DON'T MOLLYCODDLE HIM! BLESSED SKY-PILOTS! NOTHING WRONG WITH HIM A SHOT OF JUNGLE-JUICE WON'T LURE, EH?



WWW. YOU'RE PROBABLY RIGHT. IN MY EXPERIENCE, POISON SOLVES MOST OF LIFE'S PROBLEMS...

HE'S FINISHED HERE, MR. PROTHERO, HE'S YOURS.

WHAT...? DELIA, THEY'RE TAKING ME AWAY! DON'T LET THEM...



COME ON, MATEY. DON'T MAKE ME MAD.

DELIA?

DELIA, WHAT ABOUT THE BACON AND EGGS?

...IN NOMINI PATRI, ET FILII, ET SPIRITUS SANCTI...



DELIA, PLEASE, YOU WEREN'T LIKE THEM. I KNOW YOU WEREN'T. YOU HAD A HEART. PLEASE DON'T LET THEM DO THIS.

DELIA, ARE YOU LISTENING?!



OH NO.





HOW DID I GET  
HERE, TO THIS  
STINKING PLACE,  
MY JOB, MY LIFE,  
MY CONSCIENCE,  
MY PRISON...



AND YES, IT'S  
JUST THE  
DRUGS, BUT...

BUT HE WAS DRUGGED  
TOO, LOCKED AWAY TO  
DIE, AND HE REACHED  
SOME UNDERSTANDING.



WHO IMPRISONED  
ME HERE?  
WHO KEEPS  
ME HERE?

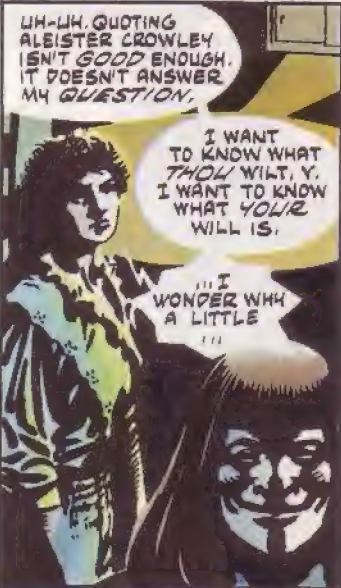
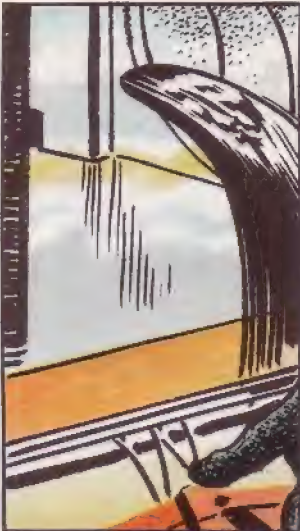
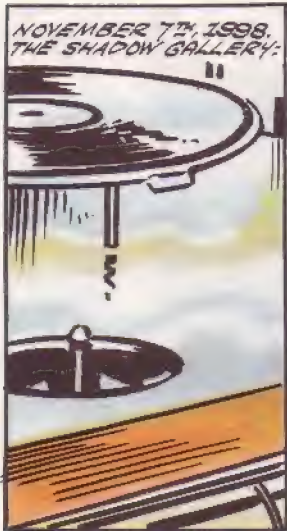
WHO CAN RELEASE  
ME? WHO'S  
CONTROLLING AND  
CONSTRAINING MY  
LIFE, EXCEPT...





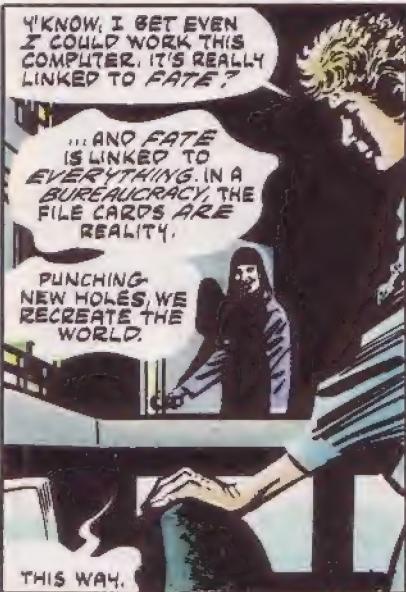
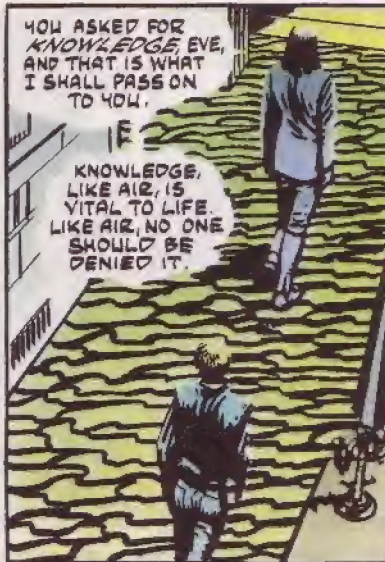






CHAPTER V  
THE VALEDICTION

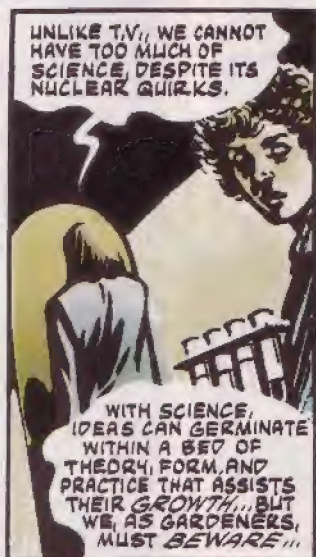
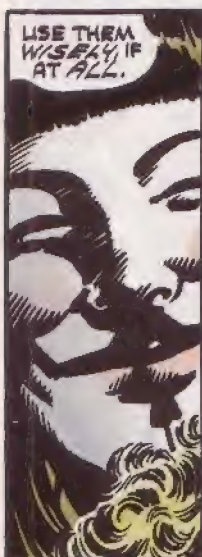
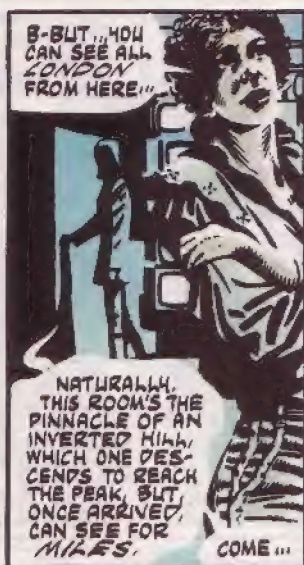
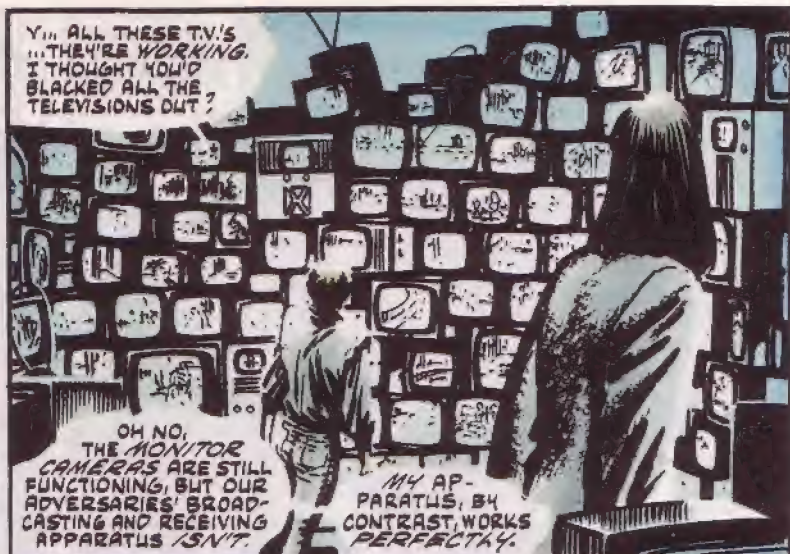




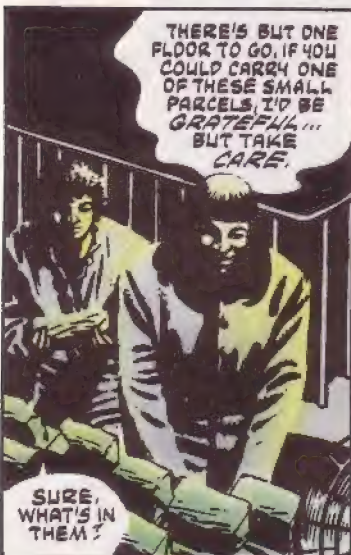
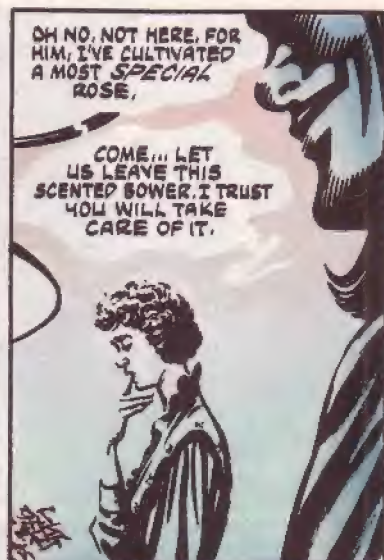




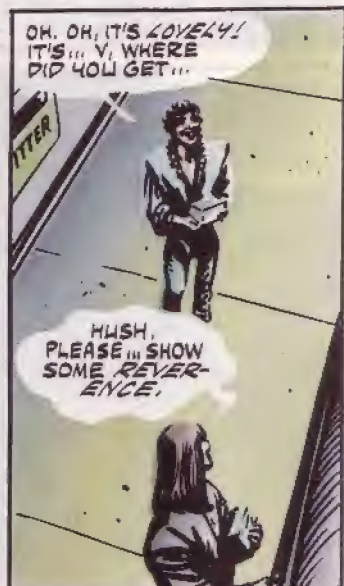
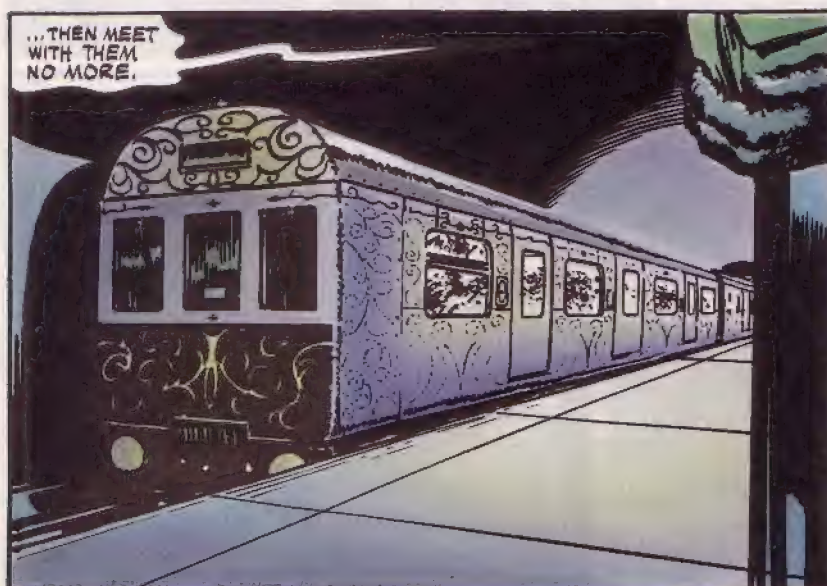
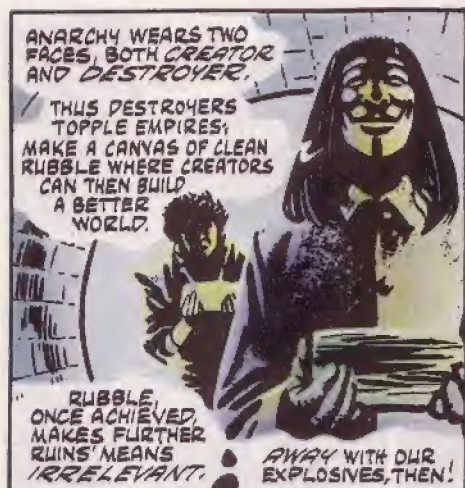




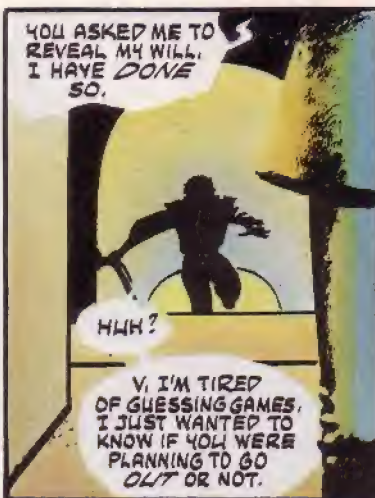
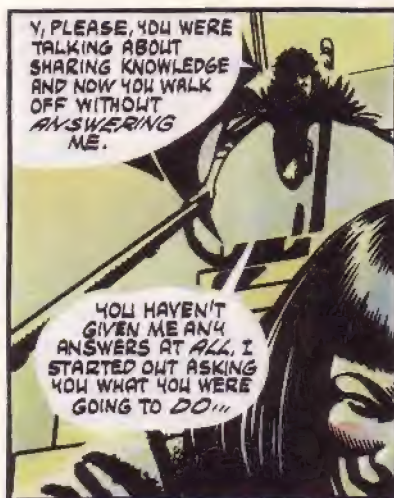
















CHAPTER 6  
VECTORS















LOOK... HERE IT IS. IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE HIDDEN, BUT YOU CAN SEE THE LENS.

EVERY PARTY MEMBER'S BED-ROOM HAS ONE, EVEN HIS OWN!

AND HE WONDERS WHY I WON'T LET HIM TOUCH ME.

OF COURSE, NONE OF HIS SPY CAMERAS ARE WORKING NOW.

THERE HE SITS AT WORK AMIDST ALL THE FUSS OF THIS PARADE, AND ALL HIS LITTLE SCREENS ARE DEAD.

A BLIND VOYEUR. HA!

HERE THEY ARE, CONRAD. HERE'S WHAT YOU'RE MISSING.

TOO BAD YOU CAN'T SEE THEM.

YOU'VE NO IDEA HOW HARD IT'S BEEN, MANEUVERING HIM INTO A POSITION WHERE HE CAN TAKE CHARGE.

OF COURSE, I'LL BE MAKING ALL THE REAL DECISIONS... BACKED UP BY YOUR MUSCLE, OBVIOUSLY.

I'M GOING TO BE LIKE EVA PERON, YOU KNOW, DID YOU EVER SEE "EYITA"?

DON'T CRY FOR ME, ARGENTINA. THE TRUTH IS...

EH C'MOAN, GESSA DRAG...

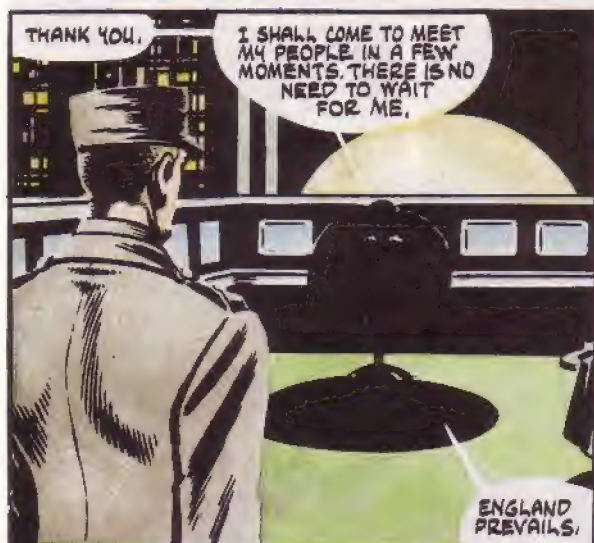
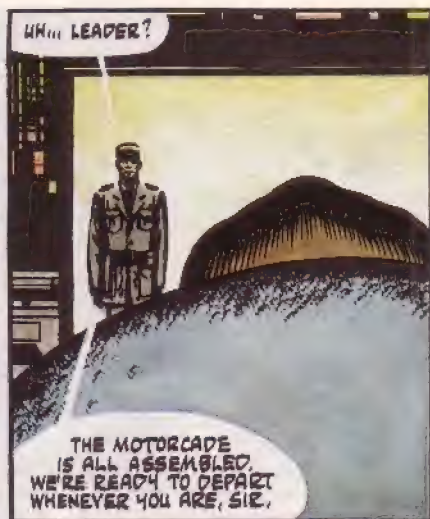
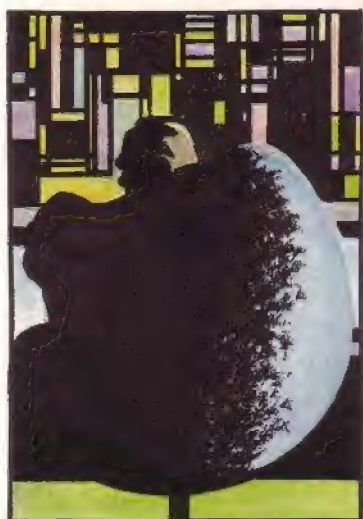
A-A! DON'T GRAB, THIS GRASS COST GOOD MONEY.

IF YOU WANT SOME, YOU'LL HAVE TO EARN IT.

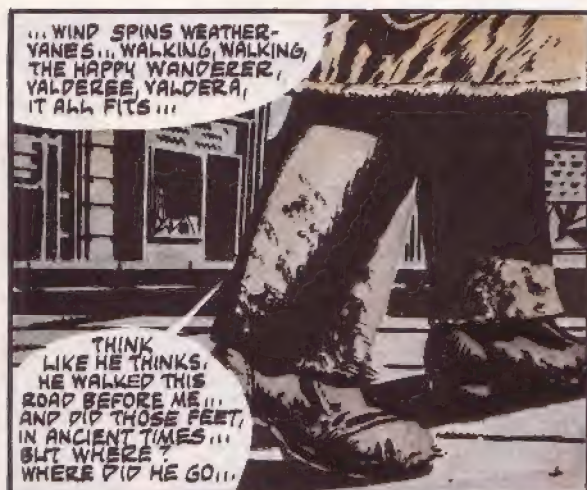
OH, A'LL EARN ET, A'RIGHT...

AM VERY RELIABLE ON THE JOBS, SO THEY...





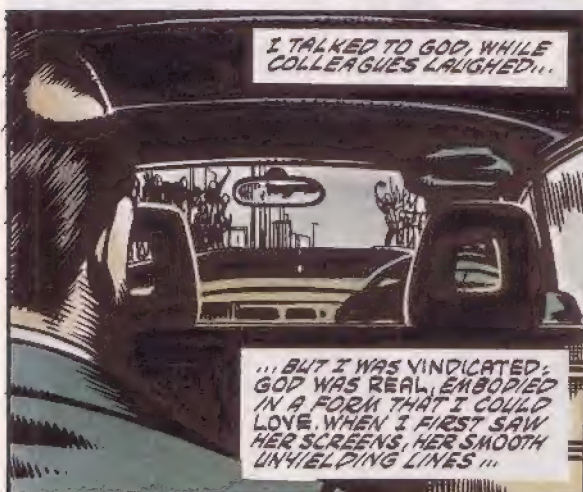
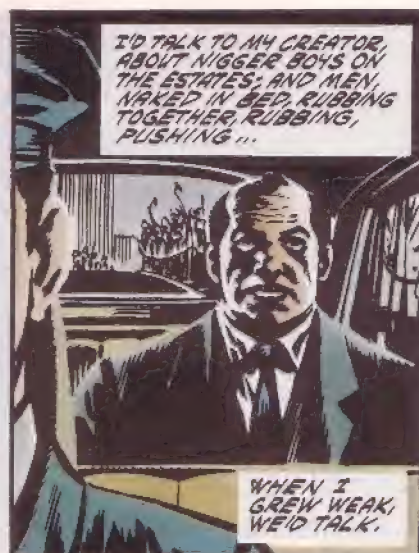








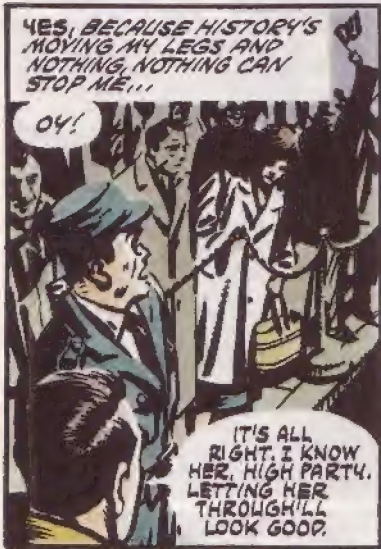
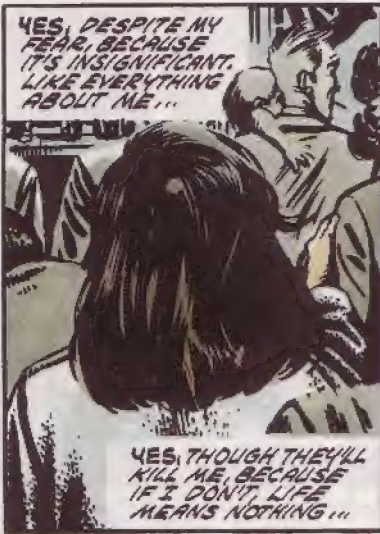
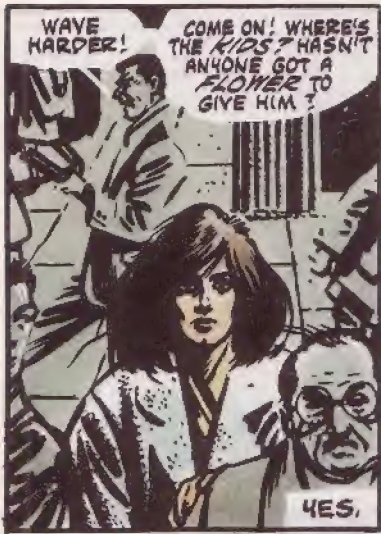








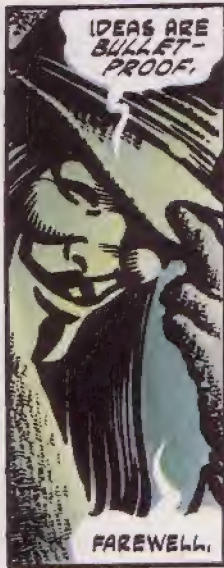




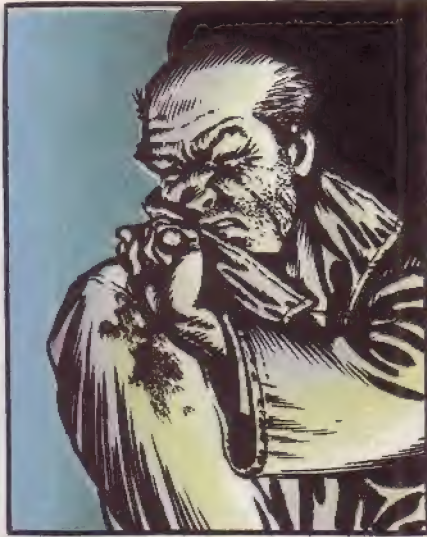












OOUGH...



BLOOD.



FLESH AND BLOOD  
AFTER ALL...

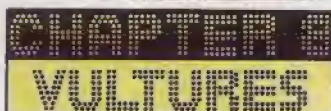
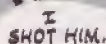
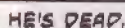
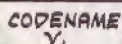
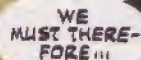
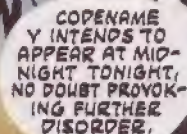
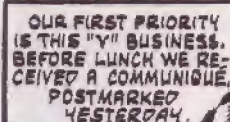
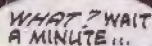
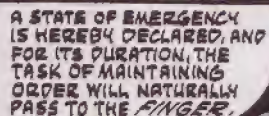
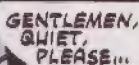
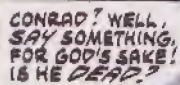
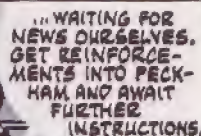
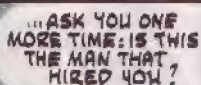
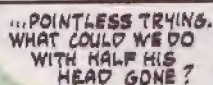
I KILLED  
YOU, YOU  
MONSTER...



I KILLED  
YOU!







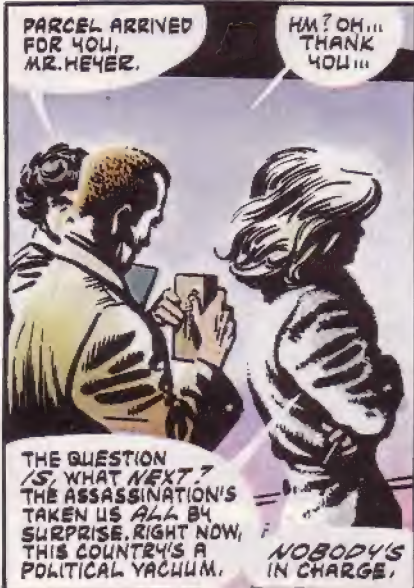




DO... DO YOU THINK HE'S REALLY DEAD? THE TERRORIST, LIKE FINCH SAID?

FINCH IS HALF OUT OF HIS MIND ON DRUGS, BY ALL ACCOUNTS. STILL, HE'S A BORING, RELIABLE LITTLE MAN...

HE PROBABLY DID IT.

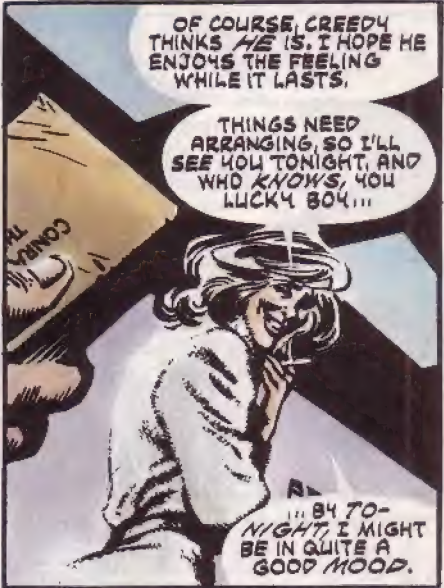
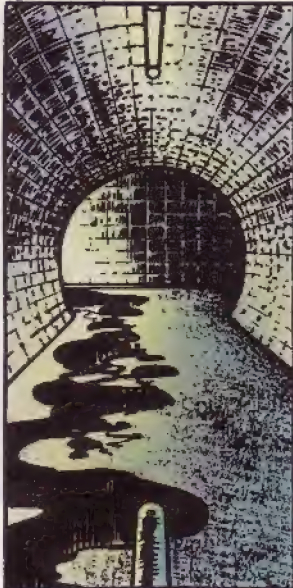


PARCEL ARRIVED FOR YOU, MR. HEYER.

HM? OH... THANK YOU...

THE QUESTION IS, WHAT NEXT? THE ASSASSINATION'S TAKEN US ALL BY SURPRISE. RIGHT NOW, THIS COUNTRY'S A POLITICAL YACUM.

NOBODY'S IN CHARGE.



OF COURSE, CREEDY THINKS HE IS. I HOPE HE ENJOYS THE FEELING WHILE IT LASTS.

THINGS NEED ARRANGING, SO I'LL SEE YOU TONIGHT, AND WHO KNOWS, YOU LUCKY BOY...

...BY TONIGHT, I MIGHT BE IN QUITE A GOOD MOOD.







MR. FINCH...? LOOK, I KNOW YOU'RE STILL SHOOK UP AND CONFUSED FROM THE DRUGS, BUT...

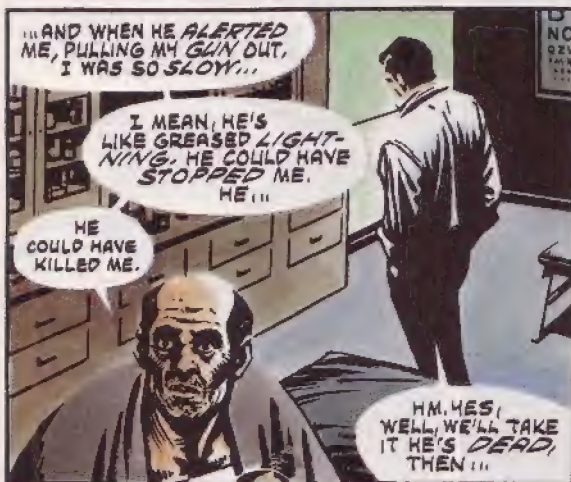
WELL, WE NEED TO KNOW CERTAIN THINGS: ARE YOU SURE YOU KILLED THE TERRORIST?

MORTALLY WOUNDED. YES, I'M SURE.



I MEAN, THE AMOUNT OF BLOOD. I MUST HAVE KILLED HIM, BUT...

BUT WHAT I DON'T UNDERSTAND, MY BACK WAS TURNED, I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW HE WAS THERE...



...AND WHEN HE ALERTED ME, PULLING MY GUN OUT, I WAS SO SLOW...

I MEAN, HE'S LIKE GREASED LIGHTNING. HE COULD HAVE STOPPED ME, HE...

HE COULD HAVE KILLED ME.

HM. YES, WELL, WE'LL TAKE IT HE'S DEAD, THEN...



...SO THE ONLY IMPORTANT THING IS, WHERE DID ALL THIS HAPPEN?



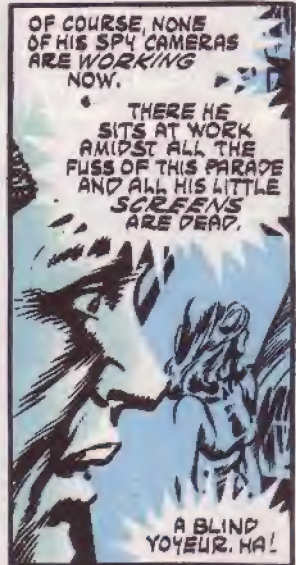
I, UH...

DO YOU KNOW, I DON'T REMEMBER.

MUST BE THE DRUGS, EH?







LOOK... HERE IT IS.  
IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE  
HIDDEN, BUT YOU  
CAN SEE THE  
LENS.

EVERY  
PARTY MEMBER'S  
BEDROOM HAS  
ONE, EVEN HIS  
OWN!

AND HE  
WONDERS  
WHY I WON'T  
LET HIM  
TOUCH ME.

OF COURSE, NONE  
OF HIS SPY CAMERAS  
ARE WORKING  
NOW.

THERE HE  
SITS AT WORK  
AMIDST ALL THE  
FUSS OF THIS PARADE  
AND ALL HIS LITTLE  
SCREENS ARE DEAD.

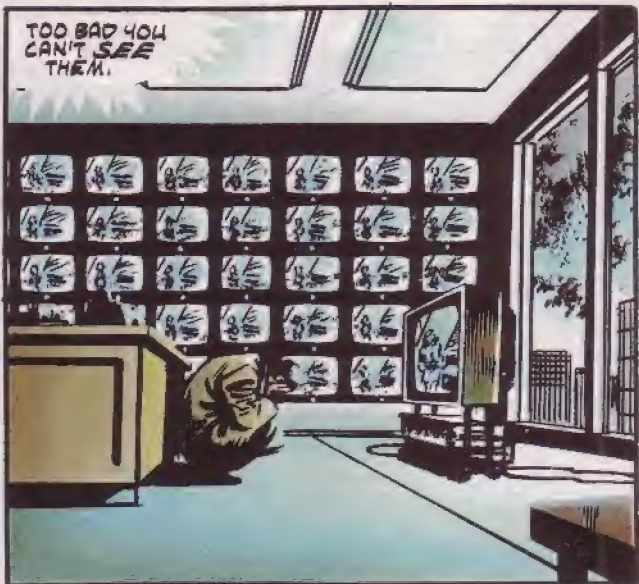
A BLIND  
YOYEUR. HA!



HERE  
THEY ARE,  
CONRAD.



HERE'S WHAT  
YOU'RE  
MISSING.



TOO BAD YOU  
CAN'T SEE  
THEM.





ATTENTION, LONDON, THIS IS EMERGENCY COMMANDER PETER CREEDEY SPEAKING.



EVERYTHING IS UNDER CONTROL, THE TERRORIST, CODENAME V, HAS BEEN SHOT AND MORTALLY WOUNDED.

IF HE'S NOT APPEARED BEFORE MID-NIGHT, WE MAY ASSUME HE'S DEAD.



WE REPEAT, THE TERRORIST HAS BEEN SHOT, THE INSURRECTION IS OVER, PLEASE RETURN TO YOUR HOMES, AND TO YOUR LOVED ONES.

ATTENTION, LONDON.

THIS IS EMERGENCY COMMANDER PETER CREEDEY SPEAKING...



AFTERNOON, ALLY, MY WORD, YOU PATCHED MY TAPELOOP INTO THE PUBLIC BROADCAST BLOODY QUICK. GOOD WORK, LADS. TOP MARKS.

EVERYTHING IS UNDER CONTROL.



THE TERRORIST, CODENAME V, HAS BEEN SHOT AND MORTALLY WOUNDED.

I TELL YOU, WITH SUSAN GONE, OUR PARTNERSHIP'LL REALLY COME INTO ITS OWN...

AHE, WELL, A BEN MEANIN' TAE TALK ABOUT THAAAT...



GOOD, LET'S TALK, CAN WE TURN THAT THING DOWN?

TERN ET DOON? A WUZ JUST THENKEN ET WUZ A BET QUIET, MASEL', MEBBE A SHUID TERN ET AP?



TURN IT UP? COME ON, STOP ARSING AROUND, IT'S DEAFENING! YOU'D HAVE TO SCREAM TO BE HEARD OVER THAT.

AHE, EVEN THEN YE MIGHT HAAY PROBLEMS.

WE MAY ASSUME HE'S DEAD.



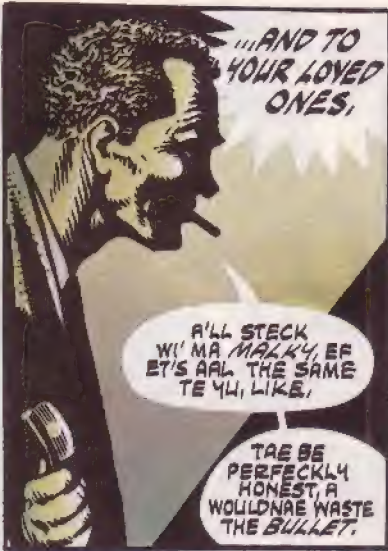
WE REPEAT, THE TERRORIST HAS BEEN SHOT.

WHAT? I'M NOT...

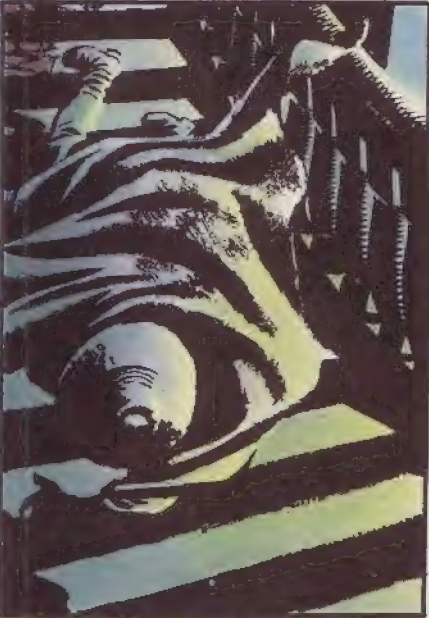
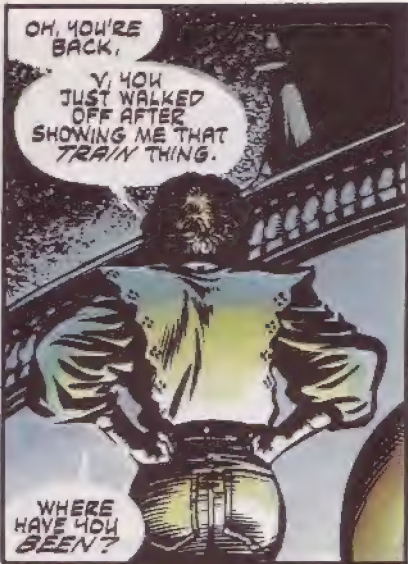
OH JESUS,

JESUS, ALLY, COME ON, DON'T LARK ABOUT. WHAT /S THIS, FOR CHEIST'S SAKE? I'M PAYING YOU GOOD MONEY...











"EVE..."

"EVE, LISTEN CAREFULLY. THE ONE I WAITED FOR HAS CALLED, AND NOW I HAVE NOT LONG..."

Y... OH GOD, DON'T TALK, I'LL GET BANDAGES..."

NO... I'D BE DEAD ERE YOU RETURNED, AND THERE ARE THINGS THAT YOU MUST KNOW..."

"THIS COUNTRY IS NOT SAVED... DO NOT THINK THAT... BUT ALL ITS OLD BELIEFS HAVE COME TO RUBBLE, AND FROM RUBBLE MAY WE BUILD..."

"THAT IS THEIR TASK; TO RULE THEMSELVES; THEIR LIVES AND LOVES AND LAND..."

WITH THIS ACHIEVED, THEY LET THEM TALK OF SALVATION. WITHOUT IT, THEY ARE SURELY CARRION."

OH NO, OH PLEASE..."

BY TURN OF CENTURY THEY'LL KNOW THEIR FATE: EITHER A ROSE MIDST RUBBLE BLOOMS, OR ELSE HAS BLOOMED TOO LATE."

"BUT WHAT OF YOU, CHILD, NOW I'M DEAD?"

"YOU'RE NOT! YOU'RE NOT GOING TO DIE!"

"HUSH, FIRST, YOU MUST DISCOVER WHOSE FACE LIES BEHIND THIS MASK, BUT YOU MUST NEVER KNOW MY FACE, IS THAT QUITE CLEAR?"

WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

...ALSO... THE VICTORIA LINE IS BLOCKED... TWIXT WHITEHALL AND ST. JAMES... GIVE ME A VIKING FUNERAL..."

GOOD LUCK, SWEET EVE. I LOVE YOU.

AVE... ATQUE... VALE...

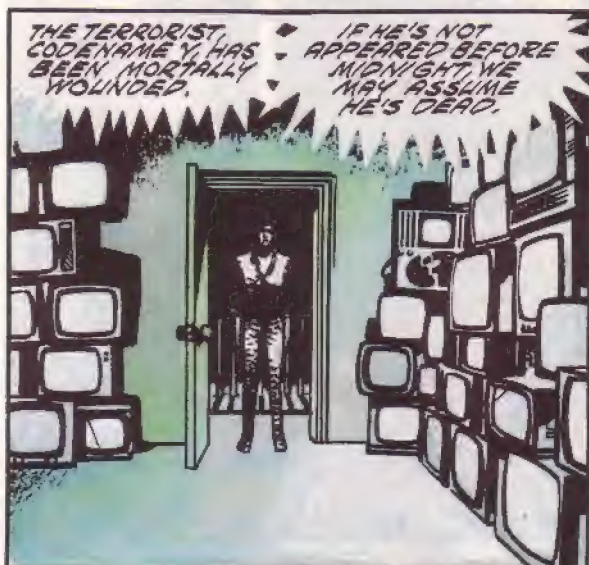
CHAPTER 9

THE VIGIL

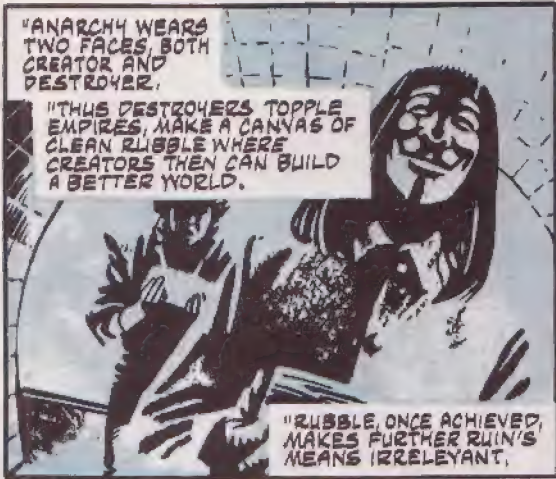




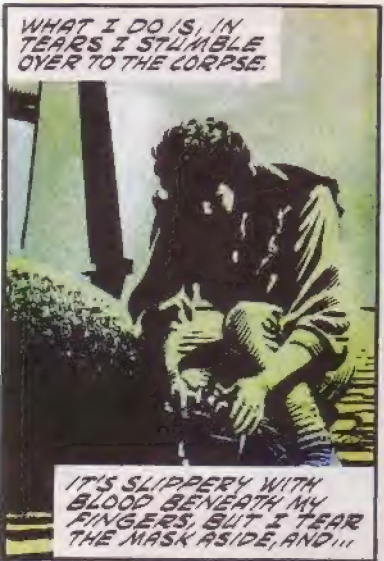




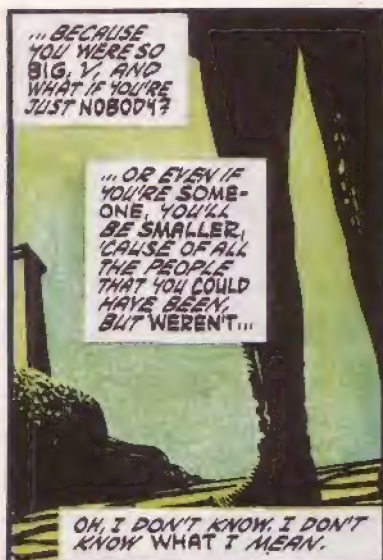




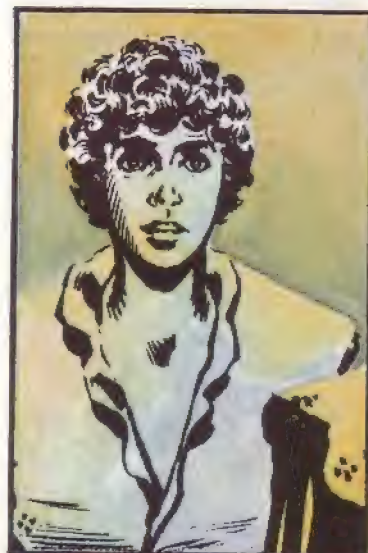
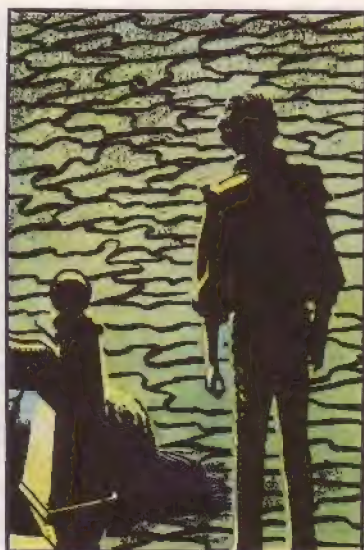




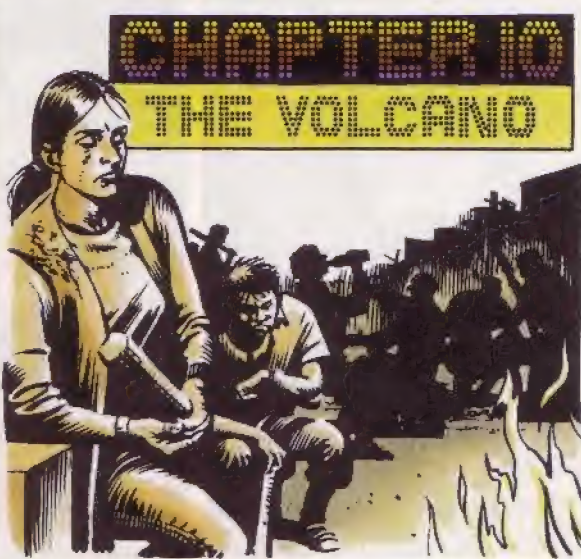
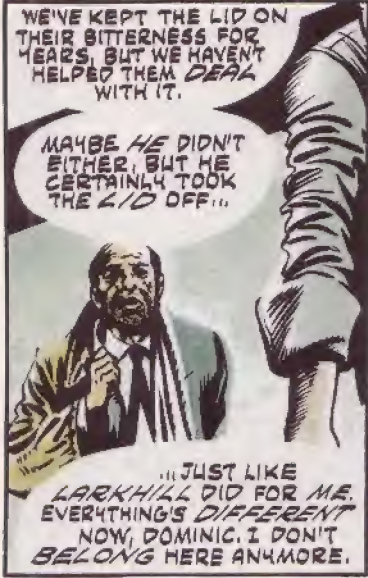
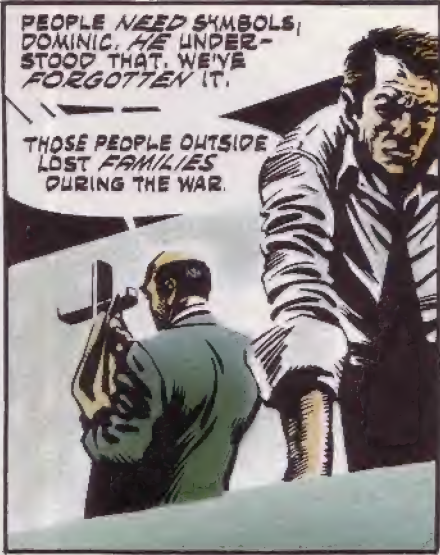












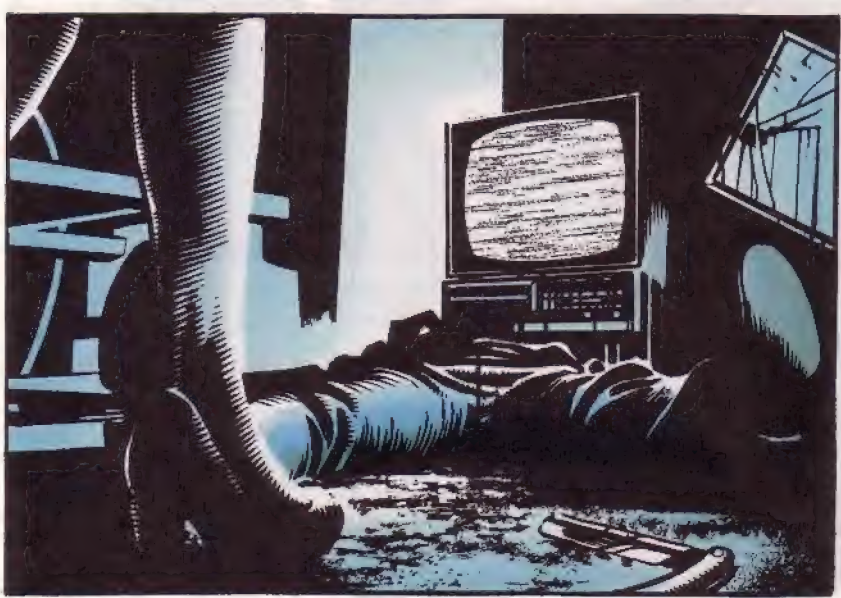
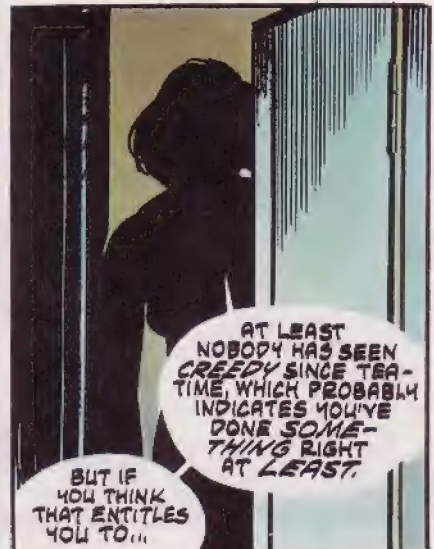
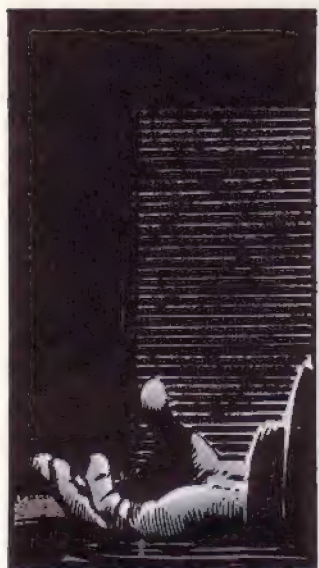












OH.

SO YOU FINALLY  
SHOWED UP I'VE  
BEEN ROUND HALF  
LONDON LOOKING  
FOR YOU.

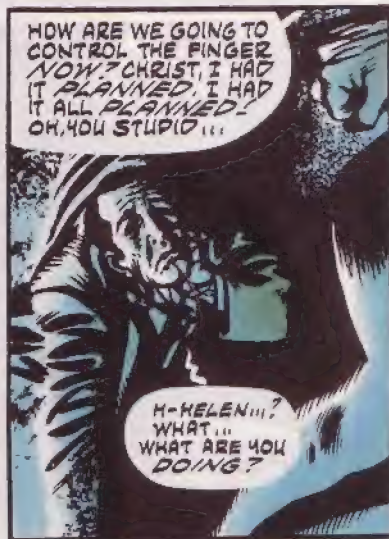
WELL, YOU  
CAN PULL YOUR  
TROUSERS BACK  
UP AND PISS OFF.  
CONRAD'S HOME  
IN AN HOUR.

AT LEAST  
NOBODY HAS SEEN  
CREEPY SINCE TEA-  
TIME, WHICH PROBABLY  
INDICATES YOU'VE  
DONE SOME-  
THING RIGHT  
AT LEAST.

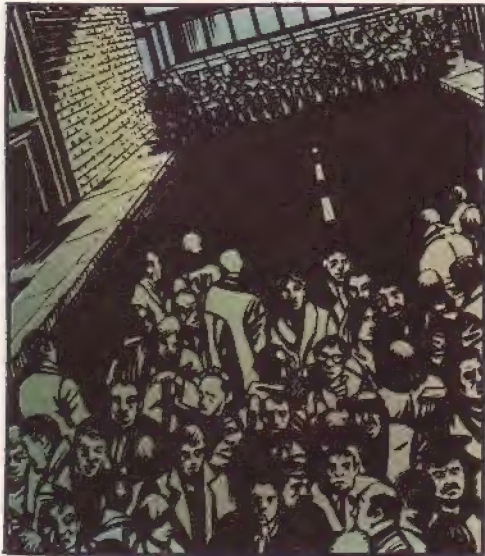
BUT IF  
YOU THINK  
THAT ENTITLES  
YOU TO...

H- HELEN...?









ME? SENIOR AUTHORITY? WELL, WHERE'S CREEPY, FOR GOD'S SAKE? HE SHOULD BE HANDLING THIS.

I SHOULDN'T WORRY, SIR. THEY'LL PROBABLY GIVE UP AND GO HOME AT MID-NIGHT, ONCE THEY ACCEPT THE TERROR-IST'S DEAD.

IT'S NEARLY TWELVE NOW...

AH, THERE YOU ARE, SIR.

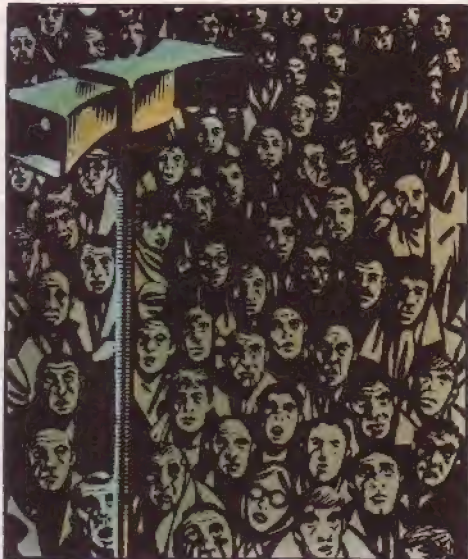
THERE'S BIG BEN STRIKING THE HOUR NOW.

LOVELY, REASSURING SOUND, DON'T YOU THINK, SIR?

UH, YES. YES, I SUPPOSE I...

WAIT A MINUTE...

BIG BEN WAS BLOWN UP TWELVE MONTHS AGO.

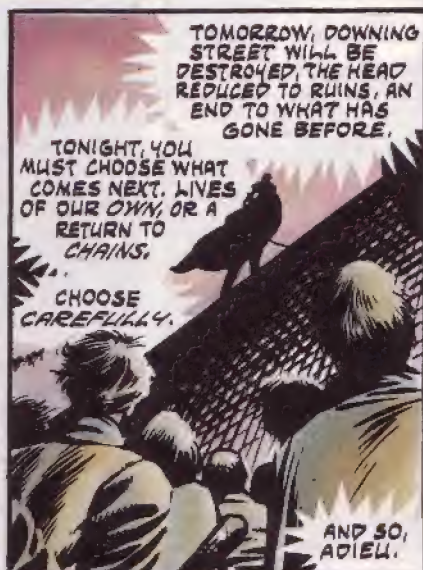


THE SPEAKERS! THAT MEANS IT'S COMING FROM THE SPEAKERS! SOMEONE MUST...

TO HAVE...



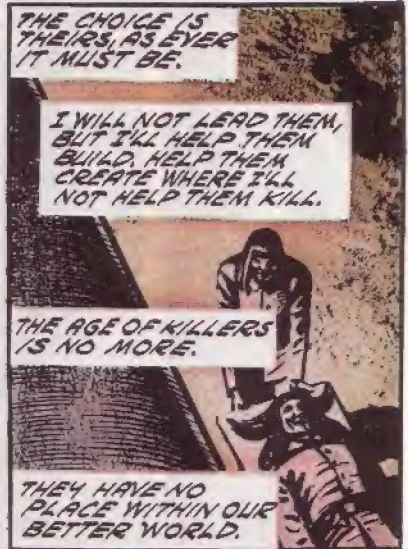




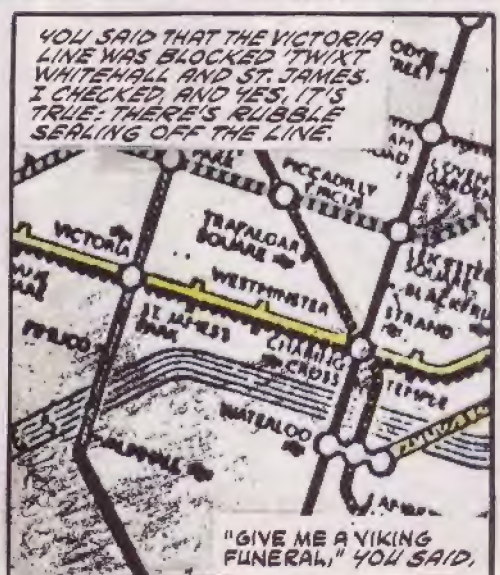












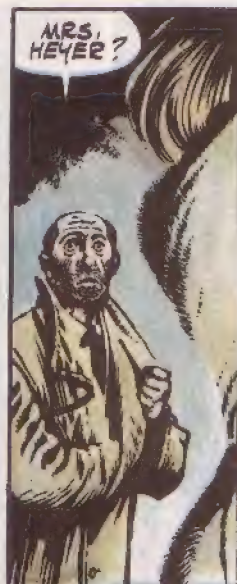
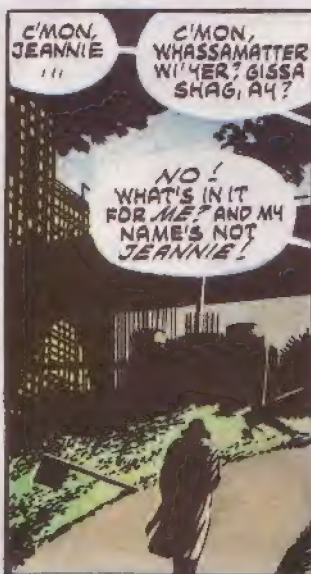




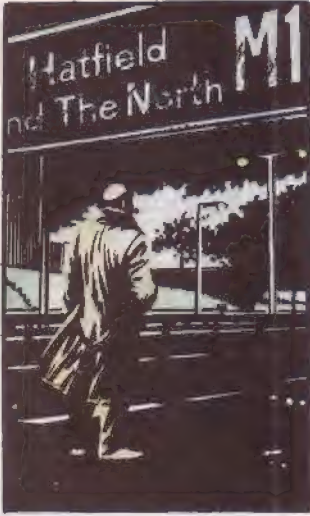
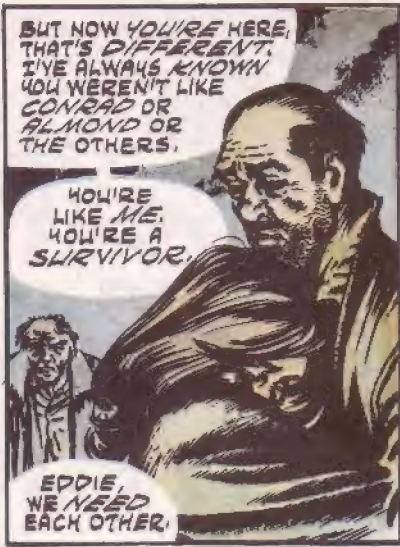














Blair,  
Enclosed: some mail  
on the Compagnie plan.  
I've got a couple of  
re-writes, too. W.

Thank,  
 Enclosed: some more  
 on the Compton plot.  
 It's got a couple of books on  
 the subject, too. Will see how it all  
 shapes up. See if  
 your library has  
 any. It's a fascinating  
 story, you know. And  
 it hasn't been done  
 justice by anyone. Maybe  
 there is an anti-habitat  
 story - like I say Colson.

Do you know I  
can't find a City Folder  
nowhere. I was all sorts of  
places. I'm still looking and I might find  
one eventually. In the meantime I had  
to do up in this City Folder idea  
decide again

to make as up...  
I'm in love with this City Fakes idea  
but if, for any reason, we decide against  
it I'm prepared to do whatever you'd  
like to come up with. See, I'm not  
advantages and disadvantages a way  
G.F. A combined advantage and  
disadvantage is to Jack Ruby for  
a wholly British figure. That's  
great for establishing him as a  
like exclusive, which Des would  
like, but bad from the  
point of view of  
selling to outside  
markets.

And something  
else: Expressing

By some stroke of nature  
 made this ship seems innovating  
 successful. Do you realize that by  
 dispensing the image of City Funder's  
 we are composing with a British  
 institution. What to do next!

...shaping public consciousness in a  
regard as conservative politicians  
as it is bound... And that's all

...advertising! ...  
...and go in  
...the woods, as  
...I've created such  
...to some time, however  
...Sachem's might be.  
...Call it  
...right?  
...is

May, Adm's Serv. V. H. Van Dusen: 'Call the  
 Ship Good Guy: That's how to rig him self  
 and the Star Line, is  
 the first Guy was last  
 thought.

Good City: That's how to rig it. Call it  
Good City: That's how to rig it. Call it  
Good City: That's how to rig it. Call it

City: Good for US appeal, right?  
 City: That's how to rig it himself  
 City: Dear hand, it  
 City: I'm sure you can  
 City: Through

Good for US appeal, right? Call the  
 1st Sec. Gen. Laid. it  
 1st Sec. Gen. Laid. it  
 through.

Call for  
US appeal, right?  
I thought

...hand, it appears, right? ...himself  
...was God ...thought

Handwritten notes at the bottom of the page, including "The" and "Handwritten notes".



# BEHIND THE PAINTED SMILE

The following article first appeared in *Warrior Magazine* (#17) during the original run of *V FOR VENDETTA* in 1983. Because the article appeared while the series was in the midst of its run, Alan Moore discusses *V FOR VENDETTA* as a "work-in-progress," and some of the aspects of the project changed before its conclusion after its lengthy hiatus. The article is presented here as a unique behind-the-scenes look at the creation of this powerful series, illustrated with many of the David Lloyd sketches which accompanied the original article, as well as Lloyd's cover paintings from the first DC Comics run of *V FOR VENDETTA*.

**T**here's one at every convention or comic mart or work-in or signing, always one nervous and naive young novice who, during a lull in the questions-and-

answers session will raise one fluttering hand aloft and enquire, tremulously, "Where do you get your ideas from?" And do you know what we do? We sneer. We lampoon and

ridicule the snivelling little oaf before his peers, we degrade and humiliate him utterly and rend him into bloodied slivers with our implacable and caustic wit. We imply that even to have voiced such a question places him irretrievably in the same intellectual category as the common pencil-sharpener. Then, when we've wrung every last sadistic laugh out of this pitiful little blot, we have the bailiffs take him outside and work him over. No, I know it isn't nice. But all the same, it's something that we have to do.

The reason why we have to do it is pretty straightforward. Firstly, in the dismal and confused sludge of opinion and half-truth that make up all artistic theory and criticism, it is the only question worth asking. Secondly, we don't know the answer and we're scared that





somebody will find out.

One thing that Dave Lloyd and I get asked quite a lot is "Where did the idea for V come from?"

Well, all right. It's a fair question. We've talked it over amongst ourselves, and we both feel that it deserves an answer, if only to make up for the cryptic and unpleasant way we've behaved in the past. The only problem is that we don't really remember. I recall that it was myself who came up with all the good ideas while Dave can produce eight sworn wit-

nesses who'll testify that it was him.

Luckily, we do still have a certain amount of documentation going back to the period when *Warrior* was still in the planning stages. Being as objective as I possibly can, I intend to rearrange these fragments into a fabulous and intricate mosaic that will once and for all lay bare the inner mysteries of the human creative process without prejudice or favour.

But it was still me who had all the good ideas.



V FOR VENDETTA started out partly in the Marvel UK *Hulk Weekly* and partly in an idea that I submitted to a D.C. Thomson's Scriptwriter Talent Competition when I was a tender 22 years old. My idea concerned a freakish terrorist in white-face makeup who traded under the name of "The Doll" and waged war upon a Totalitarian State sometime in the late 1980s. D.C. Thomson decided a transsexual terrorist wasn't quite what they were looking for and wisely opted for an entry submitted by a greengrocer from Hull entitled "Battler Bunn (He Bombs The Hun!)" or something very similar. Thus faced with rejection, I did what any serious artist would do. I gave up.

Shortly thereafter, the aforementioned *Hulk Weekly* began to appear on the stands as part of the Marvel Revolution being delivered by Dez Skinn in his new job as chief of British Marvel. The contents included Steve Parkhouse, Paul Neary and John Stokes' reworking of "The Black Knight" into a framework of Celtic legend, Steve Moore and Steve Dillon's interpretation of "Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.," and a little gem of a thirties mystery strip called "Nightraven," being written by Steve Parkhouse and drawn by Dave Lloyd with John Bolton bringing up the rear. It was a good strip and it won Eagle Awards. Thus, according to the comic book equivalent of Murphy's Law, it went down the tubes with alarming rapidity.

"Nightraven" vanished from the comic, Dez Skinn vanished from Marvel, *Hulk Weekly* vanished from the shops, spring turned to winter, leaves fell from the calendar and all of those other things that they do in films to indicate the passage



of time. While all this was going on, I was hiding under the bed and sobbing, trying desperately to get over my crushing rejection at the hands of D.C. Thomson. Things looked bleak.

Finally the 1980s rolled round and with them the first whispers of *Warrior*. Dez, now ensconced up in Studio System, had decided he wanted to be involved in comics again. So he gathered together some of the best artists and writers he had worked with in the past. These included Dave Lloyd, who was asked to create a new thirties mystery strip.

When Dave was given the mystery strip, he decided that while he had plenty of ideas upon how it should be handled visually, the mechanics of plot and characterization were, for the moment, beyond him. Since the two of us had worked happily upon a couple of back-up strips in *Doctor Who Monthly*, he suggested me as writer. At this point the telephone conversations that were to financially cripple both of us began, along with the voluminous (and, where Dave was concerned, indecipherable) correspondence that we needed in order to trade ideas and knock this thing into shape. In other words, this is the point where it gets confusing.

Given the original brief, my first ideas centered around a new way of approaching the thirties pulp-adventure strip. I came up with a character called "Vendetta," who would be set in a realistic thirties world that drew upon my own knowledge of the Gangster era, bolstered by lots of good, solid research. I sent the idea off to Dave.

His response was that he was sick to the back teeth of doing good solid research and if he was called upon to draw



one more '28 model Dusenberger he'd eat his arm. This presented a serious problem.

Mulling over the difficulty, I began to give some consideration as to what it actually was that made Pulp Magazine Adventures work. Obviously, a lot of it was rooted in the exotic and glamorous locations that the stories were set in... seedy waterfront bars, plush penthouses dripping with girls, stuff like that. All the magic of a vanished age. It struck me that it might be possible to get the

same effect by placing the story in the near future as opposed to the near past. If we handled it right, we could create the same sense of mingled exoticism and familiarity without Dave having to spend hours of his working time arguing with harassed-looking assistants at the reference library. Dave and Dez both liked the idea, and so we were off.

The next problem was the creation of the main character and the actual setting for the strip. Since Dave and I both wanted to do something that



would be uniquely British rather than emulate the vast amount of American material on the market, the setting was obviously going to be England. Furthermore, since both Dave and myself share a similar brand of political pessimism, the future would be pretty grim, bleak and totalitarian, thus giving us a convenient antagonist to play our hero off against.

Not unnaturally, I recalled my original idea for "The Doll" and submitted a rough outline to Dave. It was a pretty conventional thing, really, and little

more than predictable comic book fare with a few nice touches. It had the sort of grim, hi-tech world that you could seek in books like *Fahrenheit 451* or, more recently, in films like *Blade Runner*. It had robots, uniformed riot police of the kneepads and helmets variety and all that other good stuff. Reading it, I think we both felt that we were onto something, but that sadly this wasn't it.

At around about the same time, Never, Ltd. were preparing the first issue of their short-lived comic magazine *Pssst*.

Dave had submitted a strip-sample that he'd come up with by himself entitled "Falconbridge" featuring a freedom fighter named Evelina Falconbridge and an art style that was a radical departure from the stuff he'd been doing on *Doctor Who* and *Hulk Weekly*. *Pssst* rejected it, certain that the future of comics lay in short experimental pieces rather than in continuing characters.

For my part, when I looked at it I found it potentially exciting. Dave was obviously on the verge of something splendid here, and I very much wanted to be part of it. That said, all we really had was a lot of unusable ideas flying back and forth through the aether and nothing very tangible as a result of it. One night, in desperation, I made a long list of concepts that I wanted to reflect in *V*, moving from one to another with a rapid free-association that would make any good psychiatrist reach for the emergency cord. The list was something as follows:

Orwell. Huxley. Thomas Disch. *Judge Dredd*. Harlan Ellison's "Repent, Harlequin!" Said the Ticktockman." "Catman" and "Prowler in the City at the Edge of the World" by the same author. Vincent Price's *Dr. Phibes* and *Theatre Of Blood*. David Bowie. The Shadow. Nightraven. Batman. *Fahrenheit 451*. The writings of the *New Worlds* school of science fiction. Max Ernst's painting "Europe After The Rains." Thomas Pynchon. The atmosphere of British Second World War films. *The Prisoner*. Robin Hood. Dick Turpin...

There was some element in all of these that I could use, but try as I might I couldn't come up with a coherent whole from such disjointed parts. I'm





sure that it's a feeling that all artists and writers are familiar with... the sensation of there being something incredibly good just beyond your fingertips. It's frustrating and infuriating and you either fold up in despair or just carry on. Against my usual inclinations, I decided to just carry on.

Along with all this, we were also stuck for a name for the character. I'd abandoned the "Vendetta" idea without a thought along with the concept it related to, and was struggling with a morass of names including such forgettables as "The Ace of Shades" amongst others. While by no means my major preoccupation, it was another annoying buzz in the back of my head to add to all the rest. Meanwhile, lost for a character, I proceeded to at least try to work the world into some sort of shape, creating a believable landscape for the 1990's setting that we'd decided upon.

This proved a lot easier. Starting with the assumption that the Conservatives would obviously lose the 1983 elections, I began to work out a future based upon the Labour Party gaining power, removing all American missiles from British soil and thus preventing Britain from becoming a major target in the event of a nuclear war. With disturbingly little difficulty it was easy for me to plot the course from that point up until the Fascist takeover in the post-holocaust Britain of the 1990's.

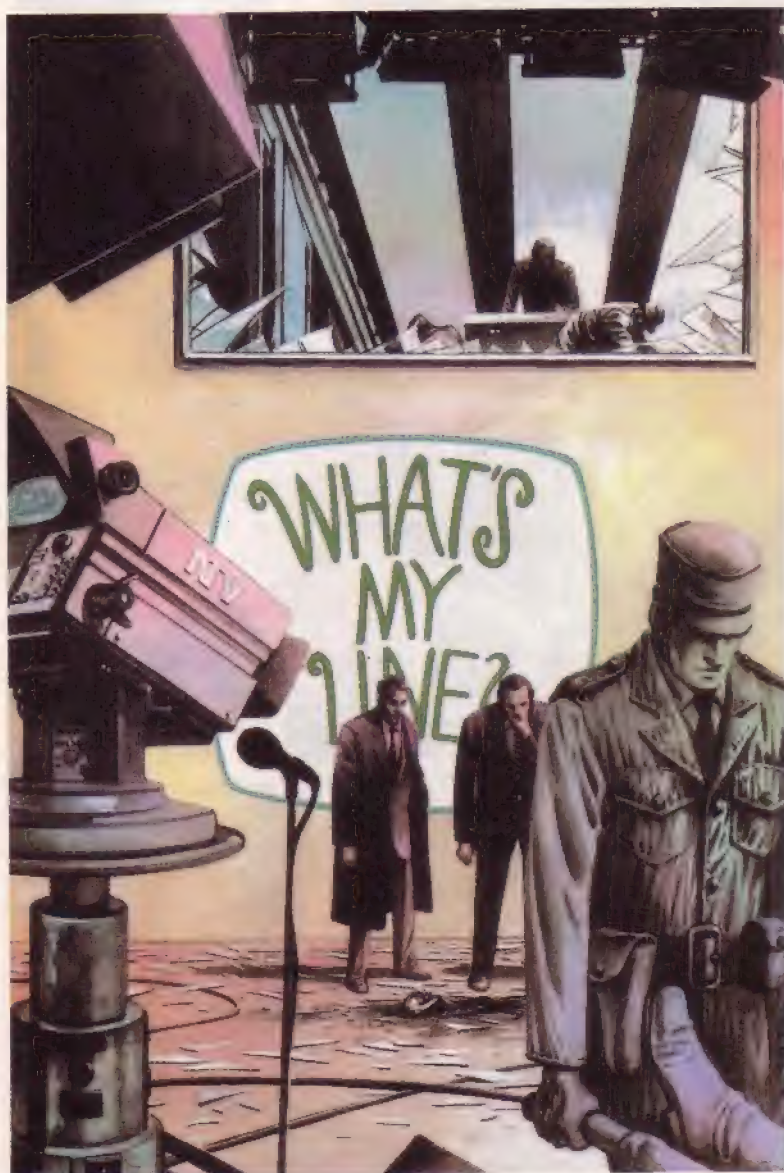
It was sometime around this point that Dez rang up and informed us that Graham Marsh (his partner at Studio System) and he had come up with the perfect title for the proposed strip, said title being "V for Vendetta." (Dez hadn't been privy to our thoughts about the thirties strip and had just arrived

at the name by pure blind coincidence.) We took this as a sign from the gods, and so "V for Vendetta" it was. Funnily enough, having an actual title to focus on gave us a fresh incentive to work out the rest of the strip, which we now applied ourselves to with a vengeance.

I revised my original notes, coming up with the idea that the central character could be some sort of escapee, psychologically altered by his stay in a Government Concentration Camp. For personal reasons, I had decided to set the camp at

Larkhill in Wiltshire, site of both an existing army camp and one of the most truly horrendous hitch-hiking holidays I've ever had in my entire life. I'll tell you about it some other time.

Dave, meanwhile, was coming up with character designs and story ideas to see if any of them tickled our creative fancy. One of his notions was that the lead character would perhaps operate clandestinely within the existing police force, subverting it from within. To this end, Dave designed a costume based upon a variation in the





way he saw police uniforms of the 1990s. It had a big "V" on the front formed from the belts and straps attached to the uniform, and while it looked nice, I think both Dave and I were uneasy about falling into such a straightforward super-hero cliché with what we saw as having the potential for being something utterly fresh and different.

The big breakthrough was all Dave's, much as it sickens me to admit it. More remarkable still, it was all contained in one single letter that he'd dashed

off the top of his head and which, like most of Dave's handwriting, needed the equivalent of a Rosetta Stone to actually interpret. I transcribe the relevant portions beneath:

"Re. The script: While I was writing this, I had this idea about the hero, which is a bit redundant now we've got [can't read the next bit] but nonetheless... I was thinking, why don't we portray him as a resurrected Guy Fawkes, complete with one of those papier mâché masks, in a cape and conical hat? He'd look *really*



bizarre and it would give Guy Fawkes the image he's deserved all these years. We shouldn't burn the chap every Nov. 5th but *celebrate* his attempt to blow up Parliament!"

The moment I read these words, two things occurred to me. Firstly, Dave was obviously a lot less sane than I'd hitherto believed him to be, and secondly, this was the best idea I'd ever heard in my entire life. All of the various fragments in my head suddenly fell into place, united behind the single image of a Guy Fawkes mask. Brain reeling, I read on.

Elsewhere in the same letter, Dave was giving me his ideas as to how he actually wanted to approach the strip in terms of layout and execution. These included the absolute banning of sound effects, and, as an afterthought, the utter eradication of thought balloons into the bargain. As a writer, this terrified me. I wasn't so much bothered about the sound effects, but without thought balloons, how was I going to get over all the nuances of character that I needed to make the book satisfying on a literary





level? All the same, there was something about the discipline of the idea that fascinated me, and while dropping off to sleep at night I'd find it nagging away somewhere in the recesses of my cerebral swamp.

A couple of days later, I wrote back to Dave telling him that the Guy Fawkes idea was definitely *it*, that not only would we do without thought balloons and sound effects but I was prepared to get rid of most of the caption boxes as well and just rely entirely on pictures and dialogue.

In the history of any strip or book or whatever, this is the moment where you get your real reward... the moment when all of the half-ideas and idiocies gel into something that is much more than the sum of its parts and thus entirely unexpected and utterly beautiful.

Now that we had the centre of the strip determined, we began to build upon it rapidly... Dave sent designs for the V character which were perfect apart from the fact that Dave had got the shape of the hat wrong. I began to sketch in the secondary characters that I figured we would need to tell the sort of story that it was fast becoming evident that we wanted to tell. Some of the characters lacked a face, even though I could see all of their mannerisms in my mind's eye. Between us, Dave and myself hammered out these fine details, often borrowing a face from some actor who we both felt was appropriate to the part... in many respects it was like casting a film, I suppose. However, many of the other characters Dave drew from his own vivid imagination, based upon my character notes.

From all the above, you might have been given the



impression that the creation of V was a very dry and calculating affair, and, at least in the early stages, I suppose it was. It's only those exceptional and rare individuals who have brilliant ideas delivered to them by the muse, complete and gift wrapped. The rest of us have to work at it.

That said, however, there comes a point where, assuming that all of your logic and planning is of a sound variety, the work starts to take off and assumes a vitality of its own. Ideas start to occur almost magically as opposed to being the

end result of a long and grinding intellectual process. This started to happen with V right from the first episode.

There was the way in which a lengthy Shakespeare quote that was arrived at by opening a copy of *The Collected Works* at random seemed to fit, exactly, line for line, with the sequence of actions that I had planned for V in his first skirmish with the forces of order. More important still, there was the way in which, aided by Dave's visuals, the characters began to take on





more and more of a life of their own. I'd look at a character who I'd previously seen as a one-dimensional Nazi baddy and suddenly realise that he or she would have thoughts and opinions the same as everyone else. I'd be planning one thing for the characters to do and then realise that they had an entirely different direction in which they wanted to go.

Perhaps most important of all, we began to realise that the story we were telling was wandering further and further away from the straightforward "one

man against the world" story that we'd started out with. There were elements emerging from the combination of my words and David's pictures that neither of us could remember putting there individually. There were resonances being struck that seemed to point to larger issues than the ones which we'd both come to accept as par for the course where comics were concerned.

Of course, as a comic strip begins to grow beyond its creators one experiences a certain feeling of nervousness at not

knowing where the strip is going to go next. On the other hand, there is a massive sense of excitement and creativity in such an unrestricted venture. I suppose it must feel a bit like surfing on a tidal wave... it feels great while you're doing it but you're not really sure of either where you're going to end up or whether you'll still be one piece when you get there.

All of this vague metaphysical blather aside for the moment, a lot of people have expressed an interest in how we actually put an episode of *V* together. Well, purely in the interests of science, this is how it goes:

To start with, we both have a rough idea of the general direction of the plot and where it's going, allowing for any sudden changes of direction that the story might decide to make for itself. We know, for example, that there will be three books in all chronicling the full *V* story. The first sets up the character and his world. The second, "This Vicious Cabaret," explores the supporting characters in greater depth and centres for the most part upon the character of Evey Hammond. The third book, tentatively entitled "The Land of Do-As-You-Please," draws all of these disparate threads into what we hope will be a satisfying climax.

Given that structure, I try to decide what I think is needed in any given episode, bearing in mind its relationship to the episode that came before it. I might, for example, decide that we've had an awful lot of talking lately and not much action. I might decide that it'd be nice to check on how Eric Finch or Rosemary Almond are getting on. Pretty soon I have a list of all the elements that I feel





it's vital we include in this particular issue. All that remains to be done is to fit them into a coherent storyline that is somehow complete in itself while remaining a part of a larger whole and at the same time moving with the fluidity that Dave and I are anxious to inject into the strip.

On good days, everything goes right and I have the whole script executed from start to finish within four or five hours. On bad days I write the whole script in four or five hours, realise that it's useless, tear it up and start again. I repeat this process four or five times until I'm reduced to a blubbing wreck that just slumps in the armchair and whimpers about how it has no talent whatsoever and will never write again. Next day I'll get up, get the whole thing right the first time and spend the rest of the day walking round reading my favourite bits to my wife, children, or visiting tradesmen. (This is why you should never marry an artist or writer. They're bad news to have around the house, believe me.)

Once I'm satisfied with the script, it goes to Dave. He runs through it very thoroughly, checking it for plot or character inconsistencies and trying to fig-

ure out how it's going to work visually. While I stage-manage most of the visual sequences from my end, I try to leave enough room for Dave to expand or alter them as he sees fit, so he'll add a couple of frames here and there to make the action flow more smoothly or maybe excise certain frames altogether. He then rings me up and runs through the script outlining his suggested changes. Usually, these are fairly minor and can be sorted out at once. Occasionally they're more serious and we'll argue ferociously

for hours until arriving at a sensible compromise. The only thing that is important to either of us is what ends up on the finished, printed page is as perfect as we can make it.

Dave then buckles down to the artwork and within a couple of weeks I receive an eagerly awaited package of reduced and lettered photocopies of the finished work by agency of the G.P.O. I suppose that theoretically I can decide at this juncture if there's anything in Dave's artwork that needs changing. So far, how-





ever, there hasn't been. Dave combines a remorseless professionalism with a deep emotional involvement in the strip equal to my own, and if ever he should decide to leave the strip there is not the remotest possibility of my working with anyone else upon it. V is something that happens at the point where my warped personality meets David's warped personality, and it is something that neither of us could do either by ourselves or working with another artist or writer. Despite

the way that some of the series' admirers choose to view it, it isn't "Alan Moore's V" or "David Lloyd's V." It's a joint effort in every sense of the word, because after trying the alternatives, that is the only way that comics can ever work. There is absolutely no sense in a writer trying to bludgeon his artist to death with vast and over-written captions, any more than an artist should try to bury his writer within a huge and impressive gallery of pretty pictures. What's called for is teamwork, in the

grand tradition of Hope and Crosby, Tate and Lyle, Pinky and Perky, or The Two Ronnies. Hopefully, that's what we've got.

So anyway, that's where we get our ideas from. I was going to go on from this point and tell you exactly who V really is, but I'm afraid that I've run out of room. The only real hint I can give is that V isn't Evey's father, Whistler's mother or Charley's aunt. Beyond that, I'm afraid you're on your own.

England Prevails.

Alan Moore  
October 1983





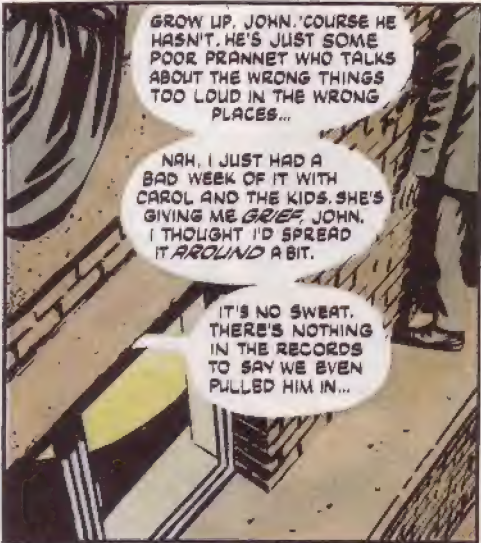


The following two short stories were first presented in *Warrior Magazine* during the original run of *V FOR VENDETTA*. Although originally conceived as "interludes" to the main story and featuring the main settings and characters, these stories were never considered by their creators as essential chapters of the *V FOR VENDETTA* storyline. For completeness sake, they are presented here.

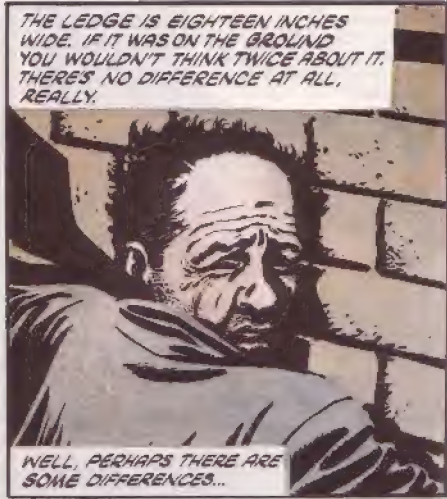










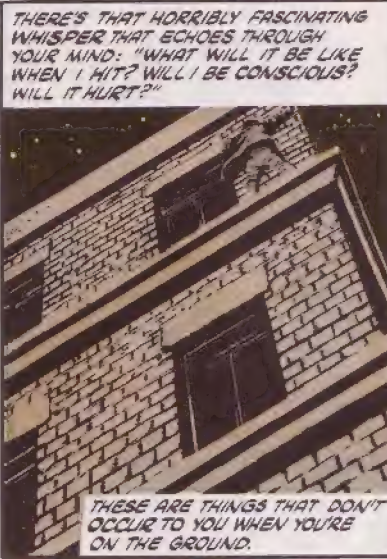


THE LEDGE IS EIGHTEEN INCHES WIDE. IF IT WAS ON THE GROUND YOU WOULDN'T THINK TWICE ABOUT IT. THERE'S NO DIFFERENCE AT ALL, REALLY.

WELL, PERHAPS THERE ARE SOME DIFFERENCES...



THERE'S THAT SICK, TINGLING FEELING IN THE SOLES OF YOUR FEET. YOU DON'T GET THAT ON THE GROUND.



THERE'S THAT HORRIBLY FASCINATING WHISPER THAT ECHOES THROUGH YOUR MIND: "WHAT WILL IT BE LIKE WHEN I HIT? WILL I BE CONSCIOUS? WILL IT HURT?"

THESE ARE THINGS THAT DON'T OCCUR TO YOU WHEN YOU'RE ON THE GROUND.



... AND THEN, OF COURSE, THERE ARE THE CROSSWINDS THAT HOWL AROUND THE EDGE OF THESE TALL CONCRETE GEOMETRIES.

OH GOD. OH NO. OH GOD...

THINGS LIKE THAT NEVER OCCUR TO YOU...



...UNTIL IT'S TOO LATE.

UHHWOOOOOOOOOOOO



NICE NIGHT.

HE FAINTS. BLACK GLOVED HANDS DRAG HIM TO SAFETY AND HE DOESN'T KNOW A THING ABOUT IT.



MEANWHILE...

HE'S BEEN GONE TEN MINUTES NOW, COLIN. WHADJA RECKON?

I RECKON THE WIND WOULD HAVE HAD HIM OFF AT THE FIRST CORNER. SUPPOSE I BETTER HAVE A LOOK...



NAH. NO SIGN OF HIM. LOOKS LIKE HE DECIDED TO ENTER THE FREE-STYLE HANG-GLIDING CHAMPIONSHIPS...

COME ON. LET'S HIT THE BRICKS. I'VE HAD A LONG DAY OF IT AND IF THAT COW STARTS UP THE MINUTE I'M IN THE DOOR, I'M GONNA CHIN HER.



ON SECOND THOUGHTS, HOW ABOUT STOPPING OFF AT THE OFFICER'S MESS FOR A SWIFT HALF AND A GAME OF... JOHN?

JOHN, DID YOU JUST HEAR SOMETHING? A SORT OF...



...CRACKING NOISE?

OH, CHRIST.



I-IT'S YOU, ENNIT? YOU'RE HIM. OH BLOODY HELL...

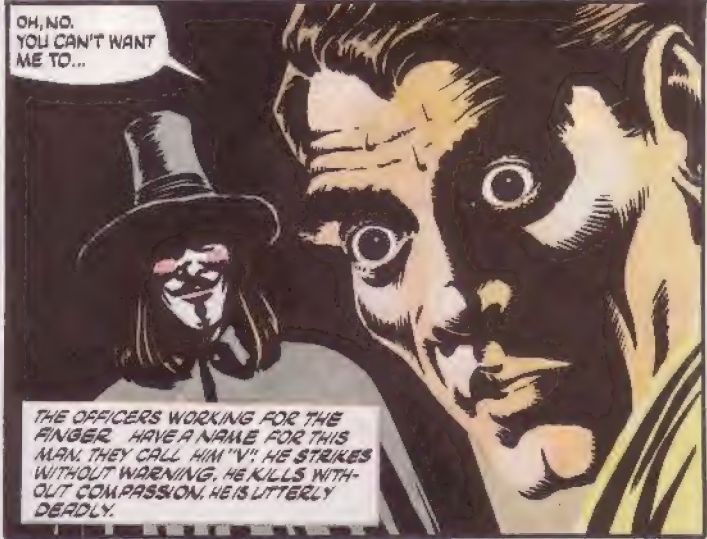
LISTEN, I'VE HEARD ABOUT YOU. YOU'RE ONLY AFTER THE PARTY HIGH-LIPS. I'M JUST A COPPER. YOU DON'T WANT NOTHING WITH ME...

...DO YOU?



OH, NO. YOU CAN'T WANT ME TO...

THE OFFICERS WORKING FOR THE FINGER. HAVE A NAME FOR THIS MAN. THEY CALL HIM "V". HE STRIKES WITHOUT WARNING. HE KILLS WITHOUT COMPASSION. HE IS UTTERLY DEADLY.





IMAGINE YOU HAD A CHOICE BETWEEN CERTAIN DEATH FROM A BLACK GLOVED HAND AND THE CHANCE, HOWEVER SLIM, OF ESCAPE. WHAT WOULD YOU DO?



...AND AFTER A FEW MOMENTS, THE MAN WHO NEVER STOPS SMILING QUIETLY CLOSES THE WINDOW. HE CANNOT ABIDE DRAFTS.



COMPARED TO THE ONES OUTSIDE...



INSPECTOR COLIN CLARKE HAS WORKED FOR THE FINGER SINCE IT WAS FORMED IN 1992. SIX YEARS AGO, BEFORE THAT HE WAS A SOLDIER.

HE HAD TO COPE WITH WORSE THAN THIS ON HIS TRAINING COURSES. MUCH WORSE. HE CAN MAKE IT. HE KNOWS HE CAN.



AFTER ALL, EIGHTEEN INCHES IS A LOT OF ROOM. IF IT WAS ON THE GROUND YOU WOULDN'T THINK TWICE ABOUT IT...

HE TAKES A STEP. HE TAKES ANOTHER STEP AGAIN. AGAIN...



THERE IS THE MAN. THERE IS THE LEDGE. THERE IS THE DISMAL DRONE OF THE WIND. THE LINGERING GLIMMER OF THE DISTANT STARS...

BEYOND THAT THERE IS ONLY SLAPSTICK. HE TAKES A STEP...



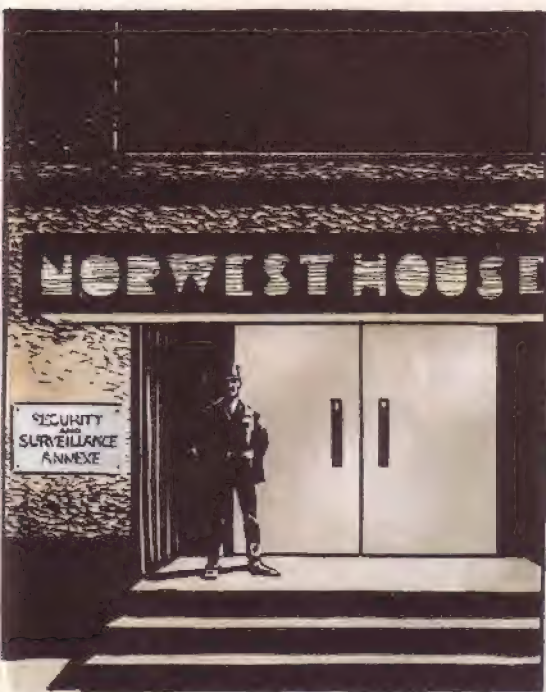
SLAPSTICK. THINGS LIKE THAT NEVER OCCUR TO YOU...



UNTIL IT'S FAR TOO LATE...

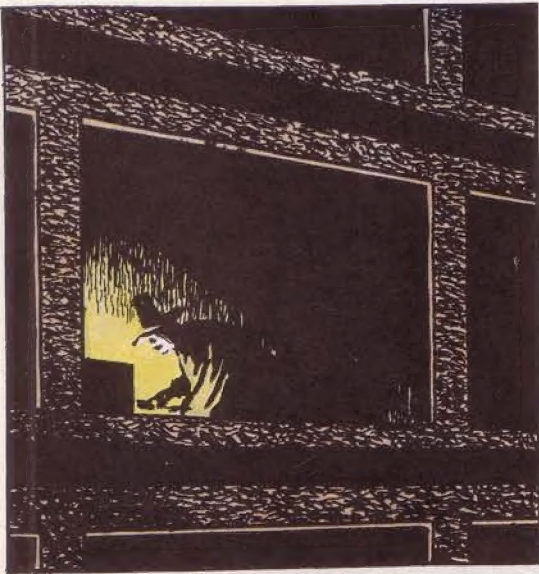




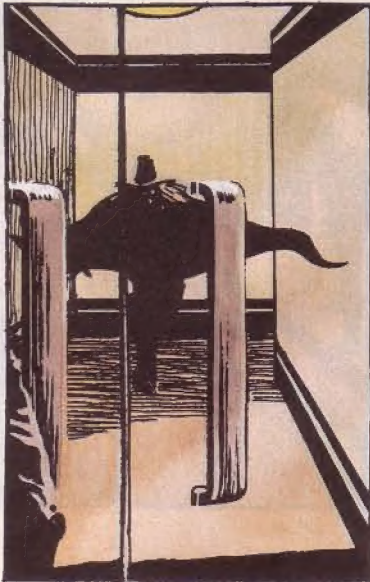


VINCENT















# V FOR VENDETTA

“ Good evening, London. It's nine o'clock and this is The Voice of Fate... It is the Fifth of the Eleventh, Nineteen-Ninety-Seven...

The people of London are advised that the Brixton and Streatham areas are quarantine zones as of today. It is suggested that these areas be avoided for reasons of health and safety...

Police raided seventeen homes in the Birmingham area early this morning, uncovering what is believed to be a major terrorist ring. Twenty people, eight of them women, are currently in detention awaiting trial...

The weather will be fine until 12:07 A.M. when a shower will commence, lasting until 1:30 A.M....

Have a pleasant evening.”



A frightening and powerful story of the loss of freedom and identity in a totalitarian world. **V FOR VENDETTA** is the chronicle of a world of despair and oppressive tyranny.

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England Prevails.



## ALAN MOORE

“ Award-winning writer Alan Moore entered comics scripting in 1980, contributing to Britain's *2000 A.D.* and *Doctor Who Weekly*. This was followed by *Marvelman* (published in the U.S. as *Miracleman*) and the original run of *V for Vendetta*. Moore entered the American comics scene in 1983 with DC Comics' *Swamp Thing* and the acclaimed *Watchmen* with Dave Gibbons. In 1988, Moore set up his own publishing imprint, Mad Love Publishing. His work also includes *Big Numbers*, with Bill Sienkiewicz, and *Lost Girls*, with Melinda Gebbie. Moore is also a contributor to *RAW*. Moore also produced the graphic novel *A Small Killing* with Oscar Zirate. Moore currently resides in England.

## DAVID LLOYD

Artist David Lloyd has been drawing comic strips since 1977, beginning with film and TV adaptations. His first regular series was *Night Raven*, and Lloyd also illustrated a series of strips featuring *Dr. Who* characters, all for Marvel UK. Lloyd then co-created *V for Vendetta* with Alan Moore, for its initial run in *Warrior*. Since *V for Vendetta*, Lloyd had produced short stories for *Eclipse*, *ESPers* with James Hudnall, *Slain* with Pat Mills, and *Crisis* stories for Fleetway. Among other pursuits, Lloyd is involved in teaching comic-book illustration at England's only school of cartoon art, The London Cartoon Center. Lloyd currently resides in Brighton, England, and he is eagerly anticipating his next visit to California.

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